

HOME RULE

*Speeches
of John Redmond, M.P.*

Edited with Introduction by
R. BARRY O'BRIEN

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HOME RULE



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SPEECHES OF
JOHN REDMOND, M.P.

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EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
R. BARRY O'BRIEN

WITH A PORTRAIT

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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE Speeches in this Volume (covering the period of Mr Redmond's public career between 1886 and 1909) have been selected by me, and revised by Mr Redmond. I alone am responsible for the Introduction.

R. BARRY O'BRIEN.

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INTRODUCTION

No one holds a more distinguished place, as an orator, in the English House of Commons of to-day, than Mr John Redmond. His speeches are persuasive, dignified, moderate in tone, skilful in arrangement, clear in exposition, logical and incisive in character. Had Mr Redmond followed his career at the Bar, his success as an advocate, would have been assured. Drawn into politics by the patriotic impulses with which Ireland so often inspires her sons, he soon won his spurs as a clever speaker, and, when the opportunity came, gradually developed into a prudent, tactful, astute parliamentary leader. Quick of perception, courteous in argument, readily receptive of divergent opinions and views; tolerant of differences, judicial, self-controlled, sympathetic, he has the faculty—not to be despised in a leader—of avoiding everything in the Councils of his party calculated to provoke hostility or to excite irritation.

It has been said that Parliamentaryism is on its trial. It has always been on its trial. It will always be on its trial while Irishmen sit in a foreign assembly.

Fifty years ago Irish Nationality was nearly killed by Parliamentaryism. It was saved by Fenianism. Between 1870 and 1874 Isaac Butt formed a Parliamentary Party, which, however, gradually went to pieces. Parnell came and made Parliamentaryism a vital force, holding the Parliamentary Party together by a hand of iron, and consolidating the nation at its back. When he died the fate of Parliamentaryism hung once more in the

balance. But, it will be allowed, that, during the past decade, there has at all events, been a united and an active Irish Party, led by a man of high Parliamentary reputation.

Let me take a rapid survey of the operations of Irishmen, in the English House of Commons, since Mr Pitt's union.

At the first General Election after the Act of Union, Ireland sent a hundred Members to the English House of Commons. Grattan was not among them. He came later (in 1805). It would perhaps have been more in accordance with the fitness of things had he remained at home. He had led the fight for legislative independence in 1782; he had led the opposition to the Union in 1800. The man who in immortal eloquence had enunciated the principle that the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland could alone make laws for Ireland ought not to have sanctioned, by his presence in the English House of Commons, the settlement which violated that principle. Politically, he ought not to have survived the Irish Constitution. He ought to have gone down with the ship.

But in truth, Grattan entered the English Parliament to serve the cause of Catholic Emancipation, which was then the question of the hour. He failed in his advocacy of the Catholic claims. His oratory electrified the House of Commons, but his appeals for justice were unheeded.

“The speech of the honourable Member [he said in 1805, replying to an attack made upon the Catholics by the renegade Duigenan, who had abandoned both faith and country] consists of four parts. *First*. An invective against the religion of the Catholics. *Second*. An invective against the present generation. *Third*. An invective against the past; and (*fourth*) an invective against the future. Here the limits of creation interposed and stopped the number. It is to defend these different generations that I rise—to rescue the Catholics from his attack and the Protestants from his defence.”

Pitt said, "Hear, hear, hear!" and the whole House cheered. The whole House often cheered Grattan, but he died in 1821 without seeing the Catholics emancipated. His last words were, "Keep knocking at the Union."

Cromwell was the first English ruler who brought Irish Members to Westminster. In 1659 one of his Members said, "I am not here to speak for Ireland, but for the English in Ireland." The Irish Members who sat in the English Parliament from 1801 to 1829 might have said the same thing. Of course they were Protestants; they belonged mainly to the landlord class; they represented the garrison. In those times, to use the words of Bright, "The gallows was the great preserver in Ireland." Force was the remedy; coercion was the order of the day.

"The Habeas Corpus," says Mr Lecky, "which is perhaps the most important part of the British Constitution, was suspended in Ireland in 1800, from 1802 till 1805, from 1807 till 1810, in 1814, from 1822 till 1824." The Insurrection Act was in force from 1800 till 1801, from 1803 till 1804, from 1808 till 1809, from 1814 till 1816, from 1822 till 1823. The power of England was used in wringing impossible rents from a starving peasantry, in extracting tithes from Catholics in support of a Protestant Church, and in stifling every cry for justice: in all these things she found willing allies in the "Irish" Members. At length, in 1829, Emancipation came under circumstances which have been well described by Peel and Wellington. Peel wrote on 8th February 1829:

"In the course of the last six months England, being at peace with the whole world, has had five-sixths of the infantry force of the United Kingdom occupied in maintaining peace and in police duties in Ireland. I consider the state of things which requires such an application of military force much worse than open rebellion. . . . If this be the state of things at present,

what would be the condition of England in the event of war? Would an English Parliament tolerate for one moment a state of things in Ireland which would compel the appropriation of half her military force to protect, or rather to control, that exposed part of the empire?"

On 4th May 1829 Wellington wrote:

"If you glance at the history of Ireland during the last ten years you will find that agitation really means something short of rebellion; that and no other is the exact meaning of the word. It is to place the country in that state in which its government is utterly impracticable, except by means of an overawing military force."

And again the Duke said:

"If we cannot get rid of the Catholic Association we must look to civil war in Ireland. It is quite clear that the organisation of the disaffected in Ireland is more perfect than ever. If they can raise money they will have good arms and ammunition, and then the contest may for a moment be serious."

O'Connell had lashed the country into fury, and the English Ministers surrendered. Up to 1829 the Irish representation was a farce.

What was it afterwards? We know what O'Connell was able to do out of Parliament. He won Emancipation. What was he able to do in Parliament? In 1830, 1831 and 1832 the question of Reform held the field in England. O'Connell threw himself on the side of the Reformers. Dr Doyle, the famous Irish bishop, had said to him in effect, "Until Parliament is reformed justice will not be done to Ireland." The agitator believed it, and was a Reformer *à outrance*. The English Reform Bill passed the Lords in June 1832. The Irish Reform Bill was read a second time in the Commons in the previous May.

O'Connell proposed various amendments in Committee. They were all rejected. O'Connell said the Bill would be a failure. Ministers said it would be a success.

Time justified O'Connell. In 1850 John Bright declared that the Irish representation was virtually extinguished. The first Reform Parliament met in January 1833. The Liberals were returned with an overwhelming majority. Earl Grey became Prime Minister. English Governments, whether Liberal or Tory, like to be independent of the Irish vote; and Grey rejoiced that, as he fondly believed, the Irish agitator would be of no account in the new combination. The Prime Minister counted without his host. The first act of the Government was the introduction of a Coercion Bill, the fiercest perhaps of its kind that was ever placed on the English statute-book. O'Connell blazed forth with characteristic energy. He called the measure—which placed the liberties of the Irish people at the mercy of the English Viceroy—"the Algerine code" denounced the Whigs as "base, bloody and brutal," and in the House and in the country waged incessant war against the Ministry. But the Bill was passed without even a mitigating amendment. The day of retribution came. O'Connell fanned the flames of agitation in Ireland. The Coercion Act did not put them out. "No tithes! No coercion!" was the war-cry of the peasantry. Around tithes and coercion the battle raged in the House of Commons.

It soon became clear that the "strong" Grey Ministry was drifting on the rocks. The Cabinet was divided about Ireland. In May 1834 a crisis was forced. Mr Ward moved that the Church Establishment in Ireland exceeds the wants of the population, and ought to be reduced. Althorp took refuge in a Commission to inquire into the revenues of the Establishment. But this compromise pleased neither the friends of the Church in the Ministry nor its foes outside. Ward pressed his resolution to a division. Althorp stood by his Commission, and Stanley (Colonial Secretary), the Duke of Richmond (Postmaster-General), Sir James Graham (First

Lord of the Admiralty), and Lord Ripon (Lord Privy Seal) resigned. The first breach in the first Reform Ministry was made. The second quickly followed. The Coercion Act was to expire on 1st August. Wellesley (the Viceroy), Littleton (Chief Secretary), and Brougham (Lord Chancellor) intrigued with O'Connell behind Grey's back. Althorp knew what was going on. Littleton met O'Connell; a bargain was practically struck between them. The agitator was to support the Government, and the Coercion Act was to be dropped. Nevertheless, on 1st July Grey proposed the renewal of the Coercion Act in all its original rigour. O'Connell at once revealed to the House of Commons what had passed between himself and Littleton, and blew the Government to pieces. Littleton resigned, Althorp resigned, Grey resigned. The first Reform Ministry was dead within fifteen months of its birth. Ireland was the angel of destruction. On the 16th July Lord Melbourne became Prime Minister. The Government passed a moderate Coercion Bill, which the Lords reluctantly accepted; and a Tithe Bill, which they cheerfully threw out. Coercion which was not hot and strong was unpalatable to the hereditary Chamber; remedial legislation in any shape or form was abominable.

The King dismissed Melbourne in November. Peel succeeded. Parliament was dissolved in December. In England the Tories won heavily at the polls. But Ireland redressed the balance, and in February 1835 Lord Melbourne again became Prime Minister, with an Irish majority. O'Connell was master of the situation. What did he do with it? The Lichfield House compact was made. O'Connell suspended the demand for repeal to give the Government a chance of passing remedial measures for Ireland. "I am trying an experiment," he said. "I want to see if an English Parliament can do justice to Ireland. I don't think it can. But I will give it a chance."

The experiment was a failure. The Government had come into office on the Irish vote, pledged to appropriate the surplus revenues of the Protestant State Church to purposes of general utility. The proposal was finally dropped. The payment of tithes was indeed transferred (by the Tithe Commutation Act of 1838) from the tenant to the landlord, but the landlord was able to reimpose, and did reimpose, the tithe on the tenant in the shape of rent. The Church gained by the transaction, for the parson was saved from the odium of collecting in person a disgraceful impost. The landlord did not lose, for he took from the tenant to give to the parson. The tenant alone was the loser. He was swindled in the name of the law.

The Irish Municipal Reform Act, 1840, was (to use the words of Sir Erskine May) a measure of "virtual disfranchisement." Of sixty-eight municipal corporations in Ireland fifty-eight were abolished, and a restricted franchise was given to the remaining ten.* The legislative failures of the Government were partly compensated for by the successful administration of Thomas Drummond. He was appointed Under-Secretary at Dublin Castle. He became practically the governor of the country, and he ruled on popular lines, with firmness and justice, holding the Orange faction in check, and telling the landlords that "property had its duties as well as its rights." Drummond died in 1840. The Melbourne Ministry fell in 1841, and Peel became Prime Minister. O'Connell immediately unfurled the banner of repeal, and flung himself heart and soul into the movement.

He ceased practically to attend Parliament, and organised those monster meetings which rooted the idea of legislative independence in the soil. The repeal movement failed because O'Connell died, because famine overspread the land, and the peasantry, perishing by want

* Sir Gavan Duffy. *Young Ireland.*

and pestilence, and unable in their sore necessity to pay impossible rents, were exterminated by the hand of the landlord and the power of the law.

In 1841 the population of Ireland was 8,199,853. In 1851 it dropped to 6,514,473. The fell work of eviction went on and the tide of emigration flowed unceasingly. It seemed as if the Irish Celt would disappear from his native land. "In a short time," wrote the *Times*, "a Catholic Celt will be as rare on the banks of the Shannon as a Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan."

Ireland had now been sending Members to the English Parliament for fifty years. It is impossible to point to a single great measure of justice which was placed on the statute-book by those Members. Of course Catholic Emancipation was passed in 1829. But it was not the work of the Irish Members. It was the work of a great revolutionary organisation founded and led by O'Connell before O'Connell entered Parliament. In Parliament O'Connell and his followers were not a legislative force. O'Connell himself was, as the *Times* called him, a "Cabinet maker and a Cabinet breaker," but Ireland gained little by these Parliamentary manoeuvres. In the end of his days O'Connell expressed his appreciation of what Irishmen could do for Ireland in the English Parliament by withdrawing from active service in the House of Commons and unfurling the banner of repeal.

There was a General Election in 1852. Sir Gavan Duffy, himself one of the leaders of the new Irish party, states the result: "When the elections were over, the Government [Lord Derby's] and the Opposition each claimed a majority in the new Parliament; this was the precise result we had hoped and predicted, for now, plainly, Irish votes would prove decisive."

There was a new departure. The Irish party of "independent opposition" was formed, pledged to act

independently of all English parties and to support only whatever English party took up the Irish question. The Irish question of the moment was the land question. It had been brought before Parliament in 1835 by Mr Sharman Crawford, who introduced a Bill to secure to Irish tenants on eviction, compensation for improvements—prospective and retrospective—made by them on the land. This Bill was thrown out again and again.

The party of independent opposition, supported by a strong agitation—in which the North joined the South—now resolved practically to force this Bill on the Government. The Irish numbered fifty Members in the new House, and had to be counted with. “We shall be glad to support the Government,” said Sergeant Shee (one of the Irish leaders) to the Ministerial Whip, “when we agree with them.” “You are very obliging,” rejoined the Whip, “but we want men who will be glad to support the Government when they don’t agree with them.” “The Queen’s Speech,” says Sir Gavan Duffy, “announced that her advisers meditated a liberal and generous policy towards Ireland.” Mr Napier, the Irish Attorney-General, practically made Crawford’s Tenants’ Compensation Bill his own. He introduced it in the House of Commons on 22nd November 1852. He said, “The whole structure of society in Ireland is in a vicious state.” The wretched tenantry were “neglected by absentee landowners, ground down by middlemen,” and “left without any security whatever for their industry and enterprise.” That was a condition of things “befitting the idle and improvident man, but altogether unsuited to the honest and industrious occupier.” It was, therefore, the business of the Legislature to interpose, and to protect the fruits of the tenants’ exertions. It was the tenants who, in the main, improved the land, and, in the interests of justice and of property itself, the value of

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those improvements ought to be secured to them. So said Mr Napier. The Bill was read a second time on 16th December. Then a crisis arose. A combination of parties in Opposition was formed to defeat the Government on Mr Disraeli's Budget. The Irish were approached and asked to join in the general attack. They declined on the ground that they would await the action of Ministers on the Tenant Right Bill. Sir Gavan Duffy tells us what happened.

“ At this moment Serjeant Shee invited Lucas and me to a consultation at his chambers in Serjeants' Inn on an overture which was private at the moment, but the lapse of a generation has rendered it historical. A Cabinet Minister still living requested him to ascertain on what condition the independent Irish party would support the Government on the coming division. We set down in writing the concessions which would justify our support, of which the chief was that a Land Bill providing compensation for past improvements should be made a measure on which the Government would stake its existence. Others related to a Catholic University, and Catholic chaplains in the army and navy, prisons and workhouses. We received back our paper after a day or two with the propositions noted. Some were rejected, others postponed for future consideration, but enough was conceded on the main question to justify us in taking the responsibility of advising our friends to vote against the Whig amendment. The Conservative party at that time distrusted nobody so rootedly as Mr Disraeli. They were always ready to believe stories of Machiavellian subtlety and bad faith against their brilliant leader. The solemn and circumspect Peel had betrayed Conservative interests, and what was to be expected of a middle-aged dandy who wore a plum-coloured velvet waistcoat and a goatee, and had written tragedies and romances? Some official, to whom rent was dearer than office, whispered among the Irish peers that Dizzy had sold them for the League vote, and a deputation was immediately sent to Lord Derby to demand explanations and guarantees. Lord Roden, Grand Master of the Orangemen, was put forward in the House of Lords to question him on the subject. He inquired whether the fact of reading for the second time a Bill

identical with Mr Sharman Crawford's indicated any intention of adopting the principles of that measure if they should be approved of by the Select Committee to whom it was about to be referred. Lord Derby assured him that, whatever might be the decision of the Committee, the Government would not under any circumstances accept the principles of Crawford's Bill. The discontented landlords were appeased, but the Irish party, who were pledged to support no Government which did not accept these identical principles, could no longer vote with Mr Disraeli without violating their pledges and setting a fatal example. On the division they voted against the Government, and it fell by a majority of nineteen in a very full House. Ten votes transferred from the 'ayes' to the 'noes' would have saved them, and they would have had twenty such votes but for Lord Derby's declaration."

Lord Aberdeen now became Prime Minister. In February 1853 the Select Committee appointed to consider Mr Napier's Bill met, and, subject to certain alterations of detail, approved ultimately of the measure, which was read a third time on the 1st of the following August. On 9th August it was read a second time in the House of Lords without opposition, but finally dropped by the Government for the session. Early in the ensuing session it was again passed through the Commons, and on 28th February 1854 read a second time in the Lords. It was then referred to a Select Committee, condemned by the Committee, abandoned by the Government, and lost. The party of independent opposition had made a gallant fight for the Irish tenants; their efforts were attended with a certain measure of success, but in the end they failed to place any measure of redress on the statute-book.

Between 1855 and 1870 the Irish representation reached its nadir. The policy of independent opposition was abandoned. The Irish Members became part and parcel of the English Liberal Party. The result was disastrous to Ireland. The Irish questions of this period

were the Church and the land. The Church did not move forward; the land went back. We have seen that in 1854 a 'Tenants' Compensation Bill not only passed the Commons, but was read a second time in the Lords. In 1858 practically the same Bill was rejected in the Commons by 200 votes to 69, and Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, said: "The leading principle of this Bill is to transfer the property of one set of persons to another and a different class. . . . A retrospective enactment, which transfers from the landlord to the tenant that which by law has hitherto been the property of the former, which both parties know, and have always known, to have been the property—an Act which does this is, I conceive, most unjust, and ought not to be allowed." But the very year that Lord Palmerston made this speech, and thought no doubt that in making it he had disposed of the Irish land question for all time, a formidable organisation, destined, by producing a political convulsion, to bring both Church question and land question within the range of practical politics, was founded. The Fenian Society sprang into being. Fenianism has been described as a movement of despair. I know not how that may be, but it certainly is true that the ranks of the Fenians were filled by men who had lost all faith in Parliamentary agitation. Fenianism aimed at separation from England, and it kindled a flame of disaffection which gradually spread all over the country and extended to Britain and America. By the lurid light of the fires which Fenianism had set blazing the English Minister studied the Irish question, and realised that Ireland was "the danger of the Empire." In 1868 an Irish Member, Mr Maguire, gave a description of Ireland which thrilled the House of Commons. He said in effect:

"the country presented the aspect of a nation on the eve of a great struggle. It was occupied by a powerful army, 'such as

we might expect to see in Poland under Russian rule.' Its cities and towns were strongly garrisoned, its barracks were filled to overflowing, and detachments of horse and foot were quartered in districts where the face of a soldier had never been seen before. Even the police barracks had been converted into 'semi-fortresses,' with stanchions, iron shutters, iron doors, and loop-holed masonry. Formidable fleets lay in the principal harbours, gun-boats were to be found in the rivers and remote creeks, and swift cruisers kept watch and ward round the coast. The gaols were filled with political prisoners, and 'constitutional liberty was on a par with that enjoyed by the subjects of the Emperor of Morocco or the King of Abyssinia.'"

The Church question and the land question were now brought within the range of practical politics. In 1869 the Church was disestablished, and in 1870 the first important Land Act was passed. The tenants were given not only compensation for improvements, but compensation for disturbance. The Land Act of 1870 was more extreme than the Land Bill of 1852.

Fenianism had succeeded where Parliamentaryism had failed. "A few desperate men," said the late Lord Derby, "applauded by the whole body of the Irish people for their daring, showed England what Irish feeling really was, made plain to us the depth of a discontent whose existence we had scarcely suspected, and the rest followed of course."

Between 1801 and 1870 three important measures of justice for Ireland were placed on the English statute-book. But not one of these measures was placed on the statute-book by the action of the Irish Members. They were all due to the pressure of revolutionary movements outside Parliament.

It is more than doubtful whether the presence of Irish Members in the English House of Commons during the first seventy years of the last century was of the slightest benefit to Ireland.

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In 1870 the Home Rule movement, itself an expression of distrust in the Irish representation at Westminster was formed by Isaac Butt. It grew apace, and soon became what it still is, the question of the hour. Other questions were also brought forward—the question of the land (which had not been settled by the Act of 1870), and the education question. In 1873 Mr Gladstone tried to settle the question of university education by a measure which gave general dissatisfaction. He proposed to abolish the Queen's University and Dublin University, and to substitute in their places one central establishment, to which the Queen's Colleges at Belfast and Cork, Trinity College, the Catholic University College, and several other Catholic seminaries were to be affiliated. The government of the new University, which was to be a teaching as well as an examining body, was to be vested in a council of persons to be named in the Bill. Future vacancies were to be filled up for ten years by the Crown, and afterwards by a mixed system of co-option and election, in which the preponderating powers would ultimately have devolved on the affiliated colleges. There were to be no professorial chairs in the new foundation in theology, moral philosophy, and modern history; and a portion of the revenues of Trinity College was to be devoted to its support. Irish, Radicals, and Tories opposed this measure, and it was defeated by 287 to 284 votes.

In 1874 there was a General Election. The Tories won, and Mr Disraeli became Prime Minister. Ireland sent 59 Home Rulers to the new House of Commons.

Mr Disraeli took up the University question, and carried a Bill abolishing the Queen's University, and establishing an examining board with power to confer degrees upon all approved candidates, irrespective of their places of education. This examining board—the Royal University—failed to settle the Irish university question. Home Rule

made no progress in Parliament, and Land Bill after Land Bill was rejected with scorn by both English parties. Then a crisis came. Famine once more visited the land. Tenants, unable to pay exorbitant rents, were mercilessly evicted. Parliament was asked to stay the hand of the landlord, but Parliament refused to interfere. Then the spirit of lawlessness was invoked to resist the tyranny of the law. The Land League was founded. Fenianism, which had been scotched but not killed, raised its head. The neo-Fenians united with the Land League, not only to obtain justice for the peasantry but to undermine English power in the island. A small band of Irish Members waged war upon the House of Commons itself, and an unparalleled system of obstruction and disorder brought contempt on that ancient institution. In fine, Charles Stewart Parnell appeared to "ride the whirlwind and direct the storm." Before the end of the year 1879 Ireland was, for the fourth time in the century, in the throes of revolution. In 1880 there was a General Election. The Liberals won, and Mr Gladstone became Prime Minister. Sixty-one Home Rulers were returned, under the command of Parnell. We have it from Mr Gladstone himself that no such party as the Irish party of that day had ever entered the House of Commons. It was an army made, disciplined, led by an incomparable general.

"Parnell [says Mr Gladstone] had a most efficient party, an extraordinary party. I do not say extraordinary as an Opposition, but extraordinary as a Government. The absolute obedience, the strict discipline, the military discipline, in which he held them was unlike anything I have ever seen. They were always there, they were always ready, they were always united; they never shirked the combat, and Parnell was supreme all the time."

Ireland throbbed with agitation, and the Irish Members

faithfully represented the spirit of defiance and lawlessness which animated the masses of the Irish people, rendered desperate by injustice and oppression. The policy of independent opposition was revived and perfected. War *à outrance* was waged against all English parties. The fatal policy of *pourparlers* was abandoned. Parnell treated only with Ministers across the floor of the House, or if he negotiated, he negotiated with shotted guns. He came not to conciliate, but to exasperate; not to win, but to force his way.

The Government began by trying to stay the hand of the landlord. A Bill was introduced to check evictions, but the House of Lords would have none of it. The failure of Ministers to protect the tenants against the rapacity of the landlords increased the disorder in the country, and intensified the hostility of the Irish Members in the House of Commons. Then the Government resolved to put down the Land League, and to crush the Irish Members. Parnell and his followers were prosecuted for conspiring to prevent the payment of rents. The jury refused to convict, and Parnell came forth from the trial stronger than ever. A Coercion Act practically suspending the Habeas Corpus was next introduced. The Irish Members fought it fiercely, but it became law. Hundreds of political prisoners were flung into gaol, but order was not restored. Under the Coercion Act the last state of Ireland was worse than the first, and the power of Parnell increased enormously. The Government finally returned to the policy of "concession." The Land Act of 1881 was passed. It was a sweeping measure of reform. It established a Land Court, to stand between the landlord and tenant, to fix fair or judicial rents. It also recognised the tenant's right to sell his holding, and provided facilities for the creation of a peasant proprietary. I have said that Catholic Emancipation, the Church Act,

and the Land Act of 1870 were due to the pressure of revolutionary movements outside Parliament, and not in any degree to the action of Irish Members. I cannot say the same thing of the Land Act of 1881. It was due partly to the action of Irish Members and partly to the pressure of a revolutionary movement outside Parliament.

In fact, it was due to the combination of Parliamentary action and revolutionary agitation—a combination brought about by John Devoy and Michael Davitt, and directed with matchless power and skill by Parnell. There cannot, however, be a doubt that the Act was due less to what was done in Parliament than to what was done outside. Lord Salisbury, in his extraordinary speech delivered on the second reading of the Land Bill, has made the point clear. He said: “In view of the prevailing agitation, and having regard to the state of anarchy [in Ireland], I cannot recommend my followers to vote against the second reading of the Bill.” A wave of revolution had swept over Ireland, and all opposition to land reform went down before it.

The Land Act of 1881 was important not only for what it did at the moment, but for what it rendered inevitable in the future. It pulled the central brick out of landlordism, and the system has been tumbling to pieces since. Dual ownership established by it was doomed to failure and destined sooner or later to end in a peasant proprietary. It did not tranquillise Ireland for an hour.

During the years 1882, 1883, 1884 and 1885 the struggle went on. The fires of agitation burned as fiercely as ever in Ireland, and in the House of Commons the Irish Members continued to show implacable hostility to English rule. Further concessions were made by Parliament. An Arrears Act was passed in 1882, by which the tenants’

arrears were on certain conditions cancelled. In 1884 household suffrage was established in Ireland. In 1885 another Land Act was passed, still further facilitating the purchase of their holdings by the tenants, and in 1888 another Act on the same lines was carried. The Land Acts of 1882 and 1885 were the necessary complements of the Land Act of 1881; and the Reform Act of 1884 was essential, as the Liberals had determined to pass a Reform Act for England, and they could not, consistently with their principles, deal out exceptional treatment to Ireland in the matter. I think it was also thought (strange as it may seem) that the extension of the franchise in Ireland would be favourable to the Liberal party—a grotesque delusion.

In 1885 came the General Election. The issue was Home Rule. Both English parties opposed the Irish demand. The result of the election was, Liberals 335, Tories 249, Home Rule 86. Parnell was master of the situation. By throwing his 86 men upon the side of the Tories he could neutralise the Liberal majority. By supporting the Liberals he could enable Mr Gladstone to form a majority of 172. Mr Gladstone, who had been partially if not wholly converted to Home Rule before the General Election, now took the question up *con amore*, and carried the bulk of his party with him. In the summer of 1886 he introduced a Bill for the establishment of an Irish Parliament. It was opposed by the full strength of the Tory party, reinforced by a strong contingent of dissentient Liberals led by Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain, and defeated by 343 to 313 votes. Parliament was at once dissolved. The elections were over by the end of July, and the Tories and dissentient Liberals combined beat the Liberals and the Irish Nationalists combined, and Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister. A Coercion Bill was passed, and the policy of twenty years

of resolute government (to use Lord Salisbury's famous expression) was inaugurated. Nevertheless, another Land Act was passed in 1887, another in 1888, and another in 1891. The ball which Parnell had set rolling in 1881 could not be stopped. Lord Salisbury again surrendered to Irish "anarchy."

Between 1887 and 1892 Home Rule held the field. Coercion and evictions were enforced, agitators were thrown into gaol, but the people stood to their guns and defied the Government. In 1892 there was a General Election, and despite the fact that a great cleavage was made in the Irish ranks by the dethronement and death of Parnell under circumstances to which I need only allude here, Ireland returned 85 Home Rulers, and in England the Liberals gained the day. Mr Gladstone once more became Prime Minister with an Irish majority. He immediately introduced another Home Rule Bill. It passed through the Commons, but was rejected in the Lords. The Government did not dissolve. They held on for three years, passing English measures by the help of the Irish vote, but unable to do anything for Ireland; if we except the appointment of a Royal Commission (asked for by Mr Redmond) to inquire into the financial relations between England and Ireland, which, dominated by the financial genius of Mr Sexton, proved the Irish case up to the hilt. In 1895 there was another General Election. The Tories and dissentient Liberals swept the board in England, and Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister. The Home Rule majority in Ireland remained intact. I have said that between 1855 and 1870 the Irish representation reached its nadir. It reached its zenith in the days of Parnell. The storm of revolution which swept over the country carried the Irish Members on with it, and under the masterly guidance of Parnell they brought the English Parliament to its bearings.

Introduction

Nor has the storm yet spent its force. All that has been done between 1895 and the present day is nothing more nor less than the back-wash of the Parnell agitation. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Land Act of 1896, the Local Government Act of 1898, and the Land Act of 1903 are as much the work of the great Irish leader as the Land Acts of '81, '82, '85, '87, and the Home Rule Bill of 1886.

On the accession of the Salisbury Ministry, in 1895, a strange era was opened in the history of the relations of England and Ireland. The Tories were now sick of coercion. The idea of "twenty years of resolute government" was given up. A policy of conciliation was actually adopted by a Tory Unionist Administration. In 1886 the Tory cry was "Kill Home Rule by coercion!" In 1895 the cry was "Kill Home Rule by kindness!"

At this time the Irish Parliamentary party was disorganised. The country was disorganised. Little pressure could be put on Ministers. Yet they were bent on a policy of conciliation. In 1896 another Land Act (facilitating land purchase, and amending the tenure clauses of the Act of 1881 on lines previously laid down by Parnell), was forced through the House of Lords; and in 1898 the Irish Local Government Act was placed on the statute-book.

Why, it may be asked, at this time, and under these circumstances, did the Government move forward? The answer may be given in a word—Parnell. The impetus which he had given to the forward movement in Ireland could not be checked. He had sown seeds which bore fruit after his death, and which still continued to bear fruit. The first answer which the Tory Unionists gave to Home Rule was coercion. Coercion was a failure. There was only one other answer to be given, namely, local government, and accordingly the Local Government

Act of 1898 became law. It was the greatest revolutionary measure ever passed by the English Parliament for Ireland. An Irish Member described it as the complement of Catholic Emancipation. But it was more far-reaching than Catholic Emancipation. It took the local government of the country out of the hands of the "loyal" oligarchy, and placed it in the hands of the "rebellious" populace. It has made Home Rule inevitable.

Still impelled by the necessities of the situation which Parnell had created, the Government continued to move forward. During the years 1898-99 the mischievous effects of the divisions in the Irish ranks were brought forcibly home to the Irish people, and they resolved that these divisions should cease, and that a united Irish force should once more confront English parties in the House of Commons. There were peace-makers among Parnellites and anti-Parnellites alike. By establishing the United Irish League Mr William O'Brien gave those men an opportunity of coming together; and the work which he had begun in Ireland was completed in London when, in 1900, Mr John Redmond was elected the leader of the Irish Parliamentary party.

During the years 1901 and 1902 the United Irish League grew in strength and influence. The Government at first pretended to treat the movement with contempt, but ended by throwing several of the Leaguers into gaol. Mr Redmond rejoiced at these coercive tactics. Coercion, he said, is the only "salt" which is required to bring the country into a healthy state. The central plank of the League platform was the compulsory sale of the land to the people. Outside the League there was an agitation in Ulster, under the direction of Mr T. W. Russell, practically for the same object. As a result of these movements in Ireland the Government once more took up the land question and introduced another Land Bill in 1903, still

further facilitating the purchase of their holdings by the tenants. Ministers had no hesitation in declaring that all this land legislation was made necessary by what Mr Gerald Balfour called the "agrarian revolution of 1881." The policy of Mr Gladstone had been the establishment of dual ownership in the possession of the land. The Tories condemned that policy, and held that the only remedy now available was practically the establishment of a peasant proprietary—an extraordinary revolution in Tory opinion, made possible by the genius and power of Parnell and the persistence of the Irish people.

Having passed several measures of justice, the Government crowned its work by trying to carry an infamous measure of injustice. In July 1905 Mr Balfour proposed certain resolutions on which he intended to found a Redistribution Bill, the effect of which would be to reduce the number of Irish Members in the House of Commons from 100 to 80 at least. In resisting these proposals Mr Redmond won a great tactical victory. He asked the Speaker whether it was not the practice that resolutions of the nature in question should be submitted to a Committee of the whole House, in order that the propositions involved might be discussed in detail in the same way as the clauses of a Bill in the Committee stage. Mr Gibson Bowles followed up this question by asking whether, as Mr Balfour's first resolution contained not fewer than eleven distinct propositions, it would not be necessary to put each proposition from the Chair, and to have each separately discussed. The Speaker said that both questions were of great importance, and that he would take time to consider them. He did take time, and then ruled, first, that according to practice it was necessary to submit the resolutions to a Committee of the whole House; and that, second, it was further necessary

that each proposition contained in the resolutions should be separately put from the Chair and separately discussed. This ruling was received with prolonged Irish cheers. Mr Redmond then asked Mr Balfour what course he proposed taking in view of the Speaker's decision. Mr Balfour replied that he would drop the resolutions and proceed directly by Bill next session. But Mr Balfour's Government was dead next session. A General Election took place in January.

The Liberal Leaders suspended the question of Home Rule and proposed the adoption of a policy of Administrative Reform. Speaking at Stirling on the 23rd November 1905, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman said:

“If he were asked for advice by an ardent Irish Nationalist, he would say that his desire was to see the effective management of Irish affairs in the hands of a representative Irish authority, and he further said that if he were an Irish Nationalist he would take it in any way that he could get it. If an instalment of representative control were offered to Ireland, or any administrative improvement, he would advise the Irish Nationalists thankfully to accept it, provided it was consistent and led up to the larger policy. To secure good administration was one thing, but good government could never be a substitute for government by the people themselves.”

The Irish Parliamentary party generously supported the Liberals at the polls, and Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman came back triumphant with an overwhelming majority at his back. On the 7th May 1907 a Bill was introduced (by a Minister who was not responsible for its conception) to establish Administrative Councils in Ireland. Mr Redmond in consenting to the first reading, though dissatisfied with the details of the measure, said that a Convention would be summoned immediately in Dublin to consider it. The Irish members, he added, would abide by the decision of the Convention.

The Dublin Convention met on 22nd May 1907 and rejected the Bill unanimously and enthusiastically. No more was heard of it. On the 13th March 1908 Mr Redmond moved:

“That the present system of Government in Ireland is in opposition to the will of the Irish people, and gives them no voice in the management of their own affairs; that the system is consequently inefficient and extravagantly costly; that it does not enjoy the confidence of any section of the population; that it is productive of universal discontent and unrest, and is incapable of satisfactorily promoting the material and intellectual progress of the people; that the reform of Irish Government is a matter vital to the interests of Ireland, and calculated greatly to promote the well-being of the people of Great Britain, and in the opinion of this House the solution of this problem can only be obtained by giving to the Irish people the legislative and executive control of all purely Irish affairs.”

This resolution, with the words “Subject to the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament,” proposed by a Ministerialist and accepted by Mr Redmond, was carried by a majority of

Ayes, 313

Noes, 157.

In the same year Mr Birrell introduced and carried (*con amore*) a Bill for the establishment of an Irish University in harmony with the wishes and demands of the masses of the Irish people. In 1909 another Land Bill (practically an amendment of the Land Act of 1903) was passed for the purpose of still further facilitating the creation of a farmer proprietary. Mr Birrell's administration has been just, sympathetic and courageous. On the 30th November 1909 the House of Lords threw out the Budget. Parliament was immediately dissolved, and a General Election took place in January 1910. The Prime Minister (Mr Asquith) raised the Home Rule flag once more. Speaking at a great Liberal meeting at the Albert Hall, on the 10th December 1909, he said:

“Speaking on behalf of the Government in March of last year, a week before my accession to the office of Prime Minister, I described Ireland as the one undeniable failure of British statesmanship. I repeat here to-night what I said then, speaking on behalf of my colleagues, and, I believe, of my party, that the solution of the problem can be found only in one way—by a policy which, while explicitly safeguarding the supreme and indefeasible authority of the Imperial Parliament, will set up in Ireland a system of full self-government in regard to purely Irish affairs. There is not, and there cannot be, any question of separation. There is not, and there cannot be, any question of rival or competing supremacies. But, subject to these conditions, that is the Liberal policy. For reasons which I believe to have been adequate the present Parliament was disabled in advance from proposing any such solution, *but in the new House of Commons the hands of a Liberal Government and of a Liberal majority will in this matter be entirely free.*”

This declaration filled Ireland with hope, but it was not the only declaration made by the Prime Minister at the Albert Hall which buoyed the spirits of the Irish people. Speaking of the rejection of the Budget by the House of Lords, and of the hostility generally of that chamber to Liberal measures he said:—

“I tell you quite plainly, and I tell my fellow-countrymen outside, that neither I nor any other Liberal Minister supported by a majority of the House of Commons is going to submit again to the rebuffs and the humiliations of the last four years. *We shall not assume office, and we shall not hold office, unless we can secure the safeguards which experience shows us to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress.*”

Only one interpretation was placed on these words—only one interpretation could be placed on them, namely, that if the Liberals were successful at the polls Mr Asquith would promptly ask the Sovereign for “safeguards” (everybody knew what the “safeguards” meant) to insure the passing into law of a Bill abolishing the absolute Veto

of the House of Lords; and that if the "safeguards" were refused, then Mr Asquith would resign. On the faith inspired by these declarations the Irish Parliamentary Party once more called upon their fellow-countrymen to support the Liberals at the polls. The General Election showed the following results:

Liberals,	275
Unionists,	273
<hr/>	
Liberal Majority,	2
Nationalists,	82
Labour,	40

The Irish party were masters of the situation.

After the election doubts arose as to what Mr Asquith might do. Did he intend to ask for the "safeguards" at once, or did he intend to wait? Did he propose to take the Budget first or to take the Veto first? In this moment of uncertainty Mr Redmond determined to make his position and the position of his party clear. Speaking at a banquet in Dublin on the 10th February 1910, he said:

"I do not venture to suggest any plan to the Government—that would be presumption on my part—but I say plainly that if Mr Asquith is not in a position to say that he has such guarantees as are necessary to enable him to pass a Veto Bill this year, and if in spite of that he intends—to use his own phrase—to retain office, and proposes to pass the Budget into law, and then to adjourn, I don't care for how long or how short, the consideration of the question of the Veto of the House of Lords, that is a policy that Ireland cannot, and will not, approve of."

John Bright once said, "I like those men best who write and speak so that you can really understand them."

There is no mistaking Mr Redmond's language at any time. But it must be allowed that Mr Asquith has not spoken with equal perspicuity since the General Election on this question of Veto and Budget.

"They are complaining that your utterances are ambiguous," says the "Priest" in *Punch* to the "Oracle" (Mr Asquith).

"Well, that's one of my 'safeguards'!"* quoth the Oracle. One point, however, Mr Asquith has made plain; he has received no "safeguards"; in fact, he did not ask for them. In March he obtained a committee of the whole House to consider "resolutions affirming the necessity for excluding the House of Lords altogether from the domain of finance, and asking the House to declare that in the sphere of legislation the power of Veto, at present possessed by the House of Lords, shall be so limited in its exercise as to secure the predominance of the deliberate and considered will of this House within the lifetime of a single Parliament."†

While these Resolutions were under the consideration of the committee, and it seemed yet uncertain what action Mr Asquith would take if they were rejected by the House of Lords, Mr Redmond made the following statement at a public meeting in Tipperary on the 3rd April:

"For my part I am not yet at this moment assured as to what will happen after the Lords have rejected, as they will reject, the Veto Resolutions. Up to this moment we have not yet had an explicit and unequivocal declaration that when those Veto Resolutions are defeated in the Lords the Prime Minister will immediately go to the Throne and ask for guarantees, and the Royal prerogative will be at his disposal to overbear the opposition of the Lords. We have not got an explicit declaration that if these guarantees are refused the Government will act on the Albert Hall speech and refuse to remain for one single hour in office. I would like to say, if such a statement

* *Punch*, 2nd March 1910.

† See Appendix.

were made, if we were assured that the moment the Lords rejected the Veto the Government would go and ask for those guarantees, and if they were refused would decline to retain office, that that would ease the situation for us in a very marked degree. But let me ask you what would the position of Ireland and the National party be if we first agreed to pass the Budget through all its stages, and the Veto Resolutions were defeated by the House of Lords, and the Government refused to ask for guarantees or paltered on the question, or, having asked guarantees and the guarantees having been refused, they continued to cling to office and postponed their fight against the House of Lords? We would then have abandoned the one great weapon by which we can force them to stand to their pledge. Now it may be asked, "Why am I so distrustful and so suspicious?" My whole political experience has taught me that Ireland's only safety is to be suspicious and distrustful of every English party. I sincerely hope that the explicit declarations to which I have referred will be made, and I go further and I say that if I am assured that the Government will honestly ask for the guarantees when the Lords reject the Veto, and if they are refused the guarantees they will refuse to hold office and precipitate a crisis, and if even the third reading of the Budget were held back until we saw what is going to happen, if that took place then we could easily, with the utmost safety to our cause, and quite consistently with our policy and pledges, settle down to discuss such concessions on the Budget as would make the Budget as acceptable or as tolerable, at anyrate, as any British Budget can be for Ireland under the Act of Union."

On the 14th April, after the Resolutions had been passed by the Committee and agreed to by the House, Mr Asquith made the following statement:

"It is not usual for the Government to make a statement of policy in regard to contingencies which have not yet arisen, but we are confronted to-day, I venture to think, with an exceptional and perhaps a unique case.

"The three Resolutions which you, Mr Speaker, a few moments ago, put from the Chair, have two special characteristics. In the first place, having been approved in principle by the late House of Commons with an enormous majority, it will not, I think, be anywhere denied that they were prominently,—if

not predominantly, before the country at the recent General Election ; and they have, during the last fortnight, been supported in every stage of their progress in this new House of Commons by majorities which have rarely fallen short of a hundred. In the second place, to us, who sit on these benches, the passing of the principles of these Resolutions into law by means of statutory enactment is a condition not only of our usefulness, but even of our effective existence. Speaking at the Albert Hall on behalf of my colleagues and political friends in December last, before the Election, I said—and I have not a word to withdraw or explain—that it was idle for us here to hold office unless we could secure safeguards—the safeguards which experience had shown to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress. Those safeguards these Resolutions, if they are put on the Statute Book, would provide. But until they take their place there, there is no legislation except the Budget, and substantially non-contentious matters which we can without risk of futility, and even of ridicule, undertake.

“It is for these reasons, and on behalf of the Government, that I think it not only convenient, but necessary, to give notice to the House and to the country, now that these Resolutions are passing into the control of other people, of our future intentions. If the Lords fail to accept our policy, or decline to consider it as it is formally presented to the House, we shall feel it our duty immediately to tender advice to the Crown as to the steps which will have to be taken if that policy is to receive statutory effect in this Parliament. What the precise terms of that advice will be it will, of course, not be right for me to say now ; but if we do not find ourselves in a position to ensure that statutory effect shall be given to that policy in this Parliament, we shall then either resign our offices or recommend the dissolution of Parliament. Let me add this, that in no case will we recommend a dissolution except under such conditions as will secure that in the new Parliament the judgment of the people as expressed at the elections will be carried into law.”

On the strength of this statement the Irish Members supported the Budget, which became law on the 29th of April. The Veto resolutions now await their fate in the House of Lords. But Veto or no Veto, Home Rule can only be won by putting the English Minister—be he

Liberal or be he Tory—in a tight place, and keeping him there until — his “conscience” is awakened to the “Justice” of the cause. “Unfinished Questions,” said John Bright, quoting memorable words, “have no pity for the repose of nations.” The “Unfinished Question” of Home Rule will, I hope, have “no pity” for the Repose of English Statesmen.

HOME RULE

THE HOME RULE BILL, 1886

ON 8th April 1886 Mr Gladstone moved the first reading of the Home Rule Bill. He proposed to establish an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management and control of Irish affairs, reserving to the Imperial Parliament the following subjects:—The crown, peace or war, the army, navy, militia, volunteers, defence, etc., foreign and colonial relations, dignities, titles of honour, treason, trade, post-office, coinage. Besides these "exceptions," the Irish Parliament were forbidden to make any laws respecting (*inter alia*) the endowment of religion, or in restraint of educational freedom, or relating to the Customs or Excise.

The Dublin Metropolitan Police were to remain under imperial control for two years, and the Royal Irish Constabulary for an indefinite period; but eventually all the Irish police were to be handed over to the Irish Parliament. Ireland's contribution to the Imperial revenue was to be in the proportion of one-fifteenth to the whole. All constitutional questions relating to the powers of the Irish Parliament were to be submitted to the Judicial Committee of the English Privy Council. The Irish members were to be excluded from the Imperial Parliament.

The Bill was read a first time without opposition. On the 10th of May Mr Gladstone moved the second reading, which was rejected on the 7th of June by 341 votes to 311. Mr Redmond said:—

MR SPEAKER,—The House cannot have failed to notice the difference between the arguments advanced by the hon. and learned gentleman who had just sat down (Mr E. Clarke, Q.C.) and those which were urged by the right hon. member for Bury (Sir H. James). The right hon. member for Bury argued that the Bill was so far-reaching that it would be dangerous to pass it, and his argument was

based on profound distrust of the Irish people. The hon. and learned member for Plymouth, on the contrary, contended that the Bill provides so flimsy and worthless a scheme that if the Irish people had any self-respect they would not accept it. Perhaps the Irish people might be allowed to judge for themselves, and to speak for themselves in this matter. I trust the House will accept with readiness the statement of the representatives of the Irish people that, on the whole, they are satisfied with this Bill, and that, so far as their judgment goes, it provides a settlement of the question. No one could have failed to note the bent given to the discussion now and on the first reading by the enemies of this Bill. They have exhaustively criticised its details, but have said nothing about its vital principle. I prefer to take a course more suitable to the present stage and to argue on the general principle of the measure. What is its essential principle? No dissent was expressed when the right hon. gentleman, who has spoken from the Government bench (Mr Campbell-Bannerman), described that principle as the establishment of a Parliament in Ireland with certain well-defined powers for the legislative and administrative control of Irish affairs. Arguing the subject from the standpoint of an Irishman and a Nationalist, the first thing I ask the House to consider is whether that principle is one which Ireland has a right to have conceded to her. I am aware this argument of right may not appeal with much force to some classes of English members, but it will appeal with force to the English masses, who are a justice-loving people, and also, I hope, to their representatives in this House. Grattan, who, in addition to being an ardent Irish Nationalist, was also a devoted adherent of the Imperial greatness of England, argued thus upon this topic of right:—

“Before Ireland goes into her title, let us hear the title of England, for it is not a question whether Ireland has a right to be free but whether Great Britain has a right to enslave her. When the latter country asks what right have the Irish to make laws for themselves, Ireland will not answer, but demands what right has England to make laws for Ireland. From nature she has none. Nature has not given one nation a right over

another. She has not that right from covenant. Let her show the covenant; in what history is it recorded?"

Those who now argued against this Bill point to the Act of Union as a covenant. The answer of the Irish representatives to that argument is to point to the character of the Act of Union, and above all to the means by which it was passed. If the Act of Union is to be held to be a bar to Ireland's right to self-government then those who so hold must regard that Act as a Treaty freely accepted by both nations. Those were the grounds on which Mr Pitt recommended the Act of Union in his great speech on 31st January 1799. He said it would be a

"Union by free consent on just and equal terms—the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join for their common benefit in one Empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance under the security of equal laws and reciprocal affection."

And he quoted the lines:—

"Paribus se legibus ambæ Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant."

Is that a correct description of what the Act of Union has proved to be? "Equal laws!" Why, the whole history of Ireland since the Act of Union has been one of exceptional legislation. "Voluntary association of two great countries!" Every historian acknowledges there had not been free consent by the Irish people. The Union was carried in opposition to the will of almost the whole nation, as the Premier has said, the entire of the unbribed intellect of Ireland was against it. Mr Grey (afterwards Lord Grey) spoke on the matter of Ireland's consent in this House, and he said:—

"There are in the Irish Parliament 300 members; 120 of these strenuously opposed the Union; 162 members voted in favour of the Union, and of these 116 were placemen."

William Cunningham Plunkett also spoke on this point and his testimony was exactly the same; and while I do not desire to trouble the House by reading a number of quotations to enforce a point which I think nobody can deny—

not even the hon. and learned gentleman who has last spoken—I will read, for the benefit of some of his new friends of the Loyal and Patriotic Union, a few words by Mr Lecky. In Volume II. of his *History*, Mr Lecky wrote:—

“The years between 1779 and 1798 were probably the most prosperous in Irish history, and the generation which followed the Union was one of the most miserable. The sacrifice of nationality was extorted by the most enormous corruption in the history of representative institutions. It was demanded by no considerable portion of the Irish people; it was accompanied by no signal political or material benefit that could mitigate or counteract its unpopularity; and it was effected without a dissolution, in opposition to the immense majority of the representatives of the counties and considerable towns and to the innumerable addresses from every part of the country. Whatever may be thought of the abstract merits of the Act of Union as it was carried, it was a crime of the deepest turpitude, which, by imposing with every circumstance of infamy a new form of government on a reluctant and protesting nation, has vitiated the whole course of Irish opinion.”

On this question of right the right hon. member for West Birmingham (Mr Chamberlain) appears to be divided from the Irish representatives by a wide gulf. Last autumn he made a speech which attracted much attention and gave no little offence in Ireland. He controverted Ireland's right to self-government by the extraordinary statement that five millions of Irishmen in Ireland had no more right to govern themselves than five millions of Englishmen in London. That was regarded by Ireland as a very feeble and very insulting misrepresentation of her case. If he could have shown that London was a country distinct from England, with distinct historic traditions and distinct national characteristics; that London has possessed, as Ireland has, distinct Parliamentary institutions of her own for 600 years; that those Parliamentary institutions had been robbed from London by means such as I have described against the will of the people, and that an overwhelming majority of the people to-day demand their restoration, then indeed he would have some title to institute a comparison between the cases of London and Ireland.

But no such analogy exists. The fault at the bottom of the right hon. gentleman's argument is that he pre-supposes a perfect identity between Ireland and England. Is there any such identity? There is not geographical identity—the countries are divided by sixty miles of water. There is not historical identity—no two nations in Europe have histories more dissimilar. There is not identity of character—it is actually part of the argument of our opponents that there are deep and ineradicable differences of character between the two peoples. There is not identity of condition—England is rich—Ireland is poor. England is a manufacturing country, Ireland is an agricultural one. What identity is there? The identity imparted by the Act of Union!

The only argument in support of this idea of identity must depend upon that Act, and some gentlemen go so far as to say that the Act of Union is a fundamental and unalterable law. Many hon. members will remember Sydney Smith's remark, that "the man who talks about an unalterable law proves himself to be an unalterable fool." Lord Beaconsfield, at any rate, did not come within that sweeping statement, for in a speech made by him in the House in 1868 on the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill, he said:—

"I take no exaggerated view of even the articles of Union. I have not for a moment pretended that the articles of Union between the two nations are irreversible. I have not for a moment pretended that the articles of Union, and the great Acts of Parliament which were passed to carry them into effect, cannot by the consent of the Sovereign and of the estates of the realm be changed or modified."

Shortly after that speech the Act of Union was modified. All the Prime Minister now proposes, and all the Irish representatives ask, is that the process of readjustment which was commenced in 1869 should be carried to its logical conclusion, so that the Government of Ireland should be brought into sympathy with the will of the governed, and into harmony with the ideas and conditions of this period of the nineteenth century. So much on the argu-

ment of right. I come now to a lower, but, perhaps, a more potent argument, namely, that of expediency.

Apart altogether from Ireland's inherent right, let me ask, is it not manifestly expedient that this concession should be made? What is the history of England's effort to rule Ireland from Westminster? No Englishman, who loves the fair fame of his country, can contemplate without shame the miserable record of eighty-five years of coercion, disaffection, and ever-increasing poverty. How stands the record? Eighty-five years of English legislation for Ireland has resulted in acts that speak volumes. In evidence of promised contentment, order, and peace, there have been twelve Acts for the suspension of *habeas corpus*; 19 Peace Preservation Acts, whether so-called or otherwise; 19 Acts for limiting and controlling the possession of arms and gunpowder; 17 for the prevention of resistance to the law by means of outrages against persons and property; 26 against unlawful and dangerous societies, combinations, assemblies, and processions; 11 for the suppression of rebellions, insurrections and disturbances; and 2 for curtailing the freedom of the Press—or a Coercion Act of some sort or other for every year since that in which the Act of Union was passed. In evidence of the anticipated prosperity, there have been 11 Acts for the direct relief, otherwise than by the ordinary poor law, of exceptionally extreme poverty, and consequent distress; 10 for the indirect relief of poverty by means of advancing money for public works; 4 for giving the extremely poor employment at the public expense; 4 for contending with famine fever; 4 for saving from perishing by starvation the thousands of children deserted through the abject poverty of their parents; 3 for the relief and assistance of railway companies otherwise unable to proceed with their works; 4 for the artificial assistance of banks, and for sustaining commercial credit; and 4 for the rescue of encumbered estates from hopeless insolvency—making in all 43 Acts in acknowledgment of the ruin and despair that have haunted all sorts and conditions of men. I listened with surprise to the speech of the hon. and learned gentleman who spoke

last (Mr E. Clarke). He spoke of the Parliament of Grattan having checked the commercial development of Ireland. The hon. and learned member is a high authority, no doubt, but I think even he will himself admit that Lord Clare was quite as high an authority, and he is in direct conflict with him on this point. I will not pursue that further, but will quote a few figures to show how the development of Irish industries has been affected since the Union. I find that in Dublin in the year 1800 there were 90 master woollen manufacturers, employing 4918 hands; and in the year 1840 the industry was practically dead. There were, in 1800, 30 master wool-combers in Dublin, employing 230 hands; while in 1834 the industry was practically dead. There were 13 carpet manufacturers in Dublin in 1800, employing 230 hands, and in 1841 there were none. In the town of Kilkenny there were to be found, in 1800, 56 blanket manufacturers, employing 3000 hands; and in the year 1822 the industry was dead. Then, again, I find that in Dublin, in the year 1800, there were 2500 silk loom weavers at work, and in 1840 the industry was gone. In the year 1799 there were 2500 calico looms at work in Balbriggan; in 1841 there were but 228. In Wicklow, in 1800, there were 1000 hand looms at work; in 1841 there were none. In the city of Cork there were at work in the year 1800 the following industries, which had since declined:—1000 braid weavers, of whom only 49 remained in 1834; 2000 worsted weavers, of whom only 90 remained in 1834; 3000 hosiers, of whom only 28 remained in 1834. There were also 700 wool combers, 2000 cotton weavers, and 600 linen check weavers, each of which industries was dead in 1834. You have, therefore, the fact that all these industries which had been in existence at the time of the Union have either totally disappeared or have been partially destroyed before the year 1841. Now, I ask the House, do they seriously believe that it has been to the advantage of England, or of the Empire, that all these industries in Ireland have died out, and that the entire population has been compelled to fall back upon agriculture as its only means of living? The answer is to be found in the

agrarian troubles that have occupied so much of the time of Parliament and baffled all the efforts of your ablest statesmen to cope with or remedy. The right hon. member for West Birmingham has another argument, and it was this—that the Bill will lead to separation. He said that the Bill would change Ireland into a “foreign and hostile country,” and the hon. member for Bury followed with the same argument. It would be well for them, however, to consider whether they could make Ireland more “foreign” and “hostile” than it admittedly is at present. But in almost the same breath in which he spoke of this Bill making Ireland a “foreign” country he said it would put her in the position of Canada. Is Canada, then, a “foreign” country? The idea is almost preposterous. But why should not Ireland be put in the position of Canada? “Because,” replies the right hon. gentleman, “Canada is friendly to the Empire and Ireland is not.” But was Canada always friendly? The hon. member for West Birmingham had quoted from certain passages in the speeches of Mr Butt on the subject. I will, however, quote another passage from a speech of Mr Butt, in which, speaking of Canada, he said:—

“In 1839 Canada was with difficulty held by force of arms for the British Crown. Canada was in open rebellion. Canada was at a distance from England—close to a great republic, which was certainly not unwilling to incorporate the Canadian provinces with their States. The experiment was tried of giving Canada Home Rule. It has not disintegrated the Empire.”

But it was argued the cases were different because in Ireland there were two nations. Well, I may say by way of parentheses that we (Nationalists) detest the idea of there being two nations in Ireland. There has been too much bitterness between Irishmen, and we have always looked forward with hope and some confidence to the day when these bitter feelings would cease, and men of all creeds in Ireland would be able to join in an effort for the elevation of their common country. But were there no two nations in Canada? On the contrary. Canada had two

provinces differing in race, in religion, in language, and in law. Lower Canada contained a great French population hostile to England, alienated from her by the memories of recent conquest, and Catholic in their religion. Upper Canada was chiefly peopled by English Protestant settlers—by Puritans from Scotland and Irish Orangemen from the Bann. Home Rule was granted to Canada. The two provinces were united under one Parliament—with all these elements of distraction, and disaffection, and danger—is the Empire disintegrated? Has Canada flung herself into the arms of the United States? Is Canada torn by domestic dissensions? Canada, instead of being, as it was in 1839, the most disaffected and rebellious dependency of Britain, is now the most attached to the English connection, the most loyal in its allegiance to the English Crown. Provinces that seemed arrayed against each other in hopeless antagonism and discord are now united together. With the differences, and the passions, and the party strifes that agitate all constitutional governments—the French Catholics of Lower Canada, and the English Puritans, and the Irish Orangemen of Upper Canada, meet in one Parliament to serve the interests of that common country, attachment to which is no longer at variance with a true allegiance to the British Crown. The right hon. gentleman says Canada is only held by a “voluntary tie.” But does the right hon. gentleman, who is regarded as a leader of democratic thought in this country, mean to say he prefers a Union based upon force, as the present Union with Ireland, to a Union which rests upon the will of the people? Edmund Burke said—“A voluntary tie is a more secure link of connection than subordination borne with grudging and discontent.” So say we, and so also we believe will say the democracy of England, even though some of its so-called leaders refuse to trust the people of Ireland.

But the argument of the right hon. gentleman may be met in another way. I utterly deny that this Bill will put Ireland in the position of Canada. No colony pays any portion of the National Debt. Ireland under this Bill will pay a portion of the National Debt. No colony

pays any portion of Imperial taxation, while Ireland would do so. No colony pays Custom duties imposed by the Imperial Parliament, Ireland would do so. The colonies fix their own electoral law, but the electoral law for Ireland was to be fixed by the Imperial Parliament. Then the colonies could have an army and navy of their own, but Ireland would not have either an army or navy of her own. But we were told because Irish Members are to be withdrawn from Westminster, Ireland will become a colony. On this much-vexed question I have a word or two to say. As a Nationalist, I may say I do not regard as entirely palatable the idea that for ever and a day Ireland's voice should be excluded from the councils of an empire which the genius and valour of her sons have done so much to build up, and of which she is to remain a part. I conceive, however, that even in the Bill as it stands the permanent exclusion of Irish Members is not contemplated, and the Premier, by one of the modifications which he has announced, has provided that by address the Irish Parliament can obtain the right of being heard at Westminster whenever it desires. Beyond this at present we do not desire to go. We look at this matter as practical men. If we get our Irish assembly, heaven knows we will have a task heavy and weighty enough in the effort to bind together the disunited fragments of the nation, and to repair the shattered fortunes of our unfortunate country—a task which will tax all the resources, all the talent, and all the industry of Irishmen. I do believe that if that work is to be satisfactorily performed we cannot stand the additional drain rendered necessary by representation in this House. Further than this, I do not see how such representation is under present conditions practicable. The Federal idea I understand and sympathise with. I look forward to the day when it may be applied to England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as Ireland. Then the character of the so-called Imperial Parliament would be changed. It would be then only an Imperial Parliament, and all the kingdoms, having their own National Parliaments, might be represented in it. But if Ireland alone

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has a Parliament of her own, I do not see how she can be permanently represented in what is not only the Imperial Parliament but the Legislature of England and of Scotland. If such representation were admitted, you must either allow Irishmen who had sole control of Irish affairs to interfere in and probably decide purely English and Scotch affairs—an obvious injustice, or else you must do what the Premier declared it surpassed the wit of man to accomplish, namely, make a definite and permanent distinction between Imperial and local affairs. The hon. member who last spoke said he believed that the concession of autonomy to Ireland would lead to separation. I would ask how Ireland was held now?

Lord Arthur Hill—By force.

I thank the hon. member for the word. It is now held by force; but does the present Bill propose to take away that force, which I presume means the English army and navy. No; it still left these forces under Imperial control. But in addition to physical force you would have working on the side of connection and against separation the moral force springing from justice conceded, which the English Government of Ireland has never yet had upon its side.

I now come to what, after all, seemed to be the chief objection to Home Rule, in the minds of most Englishmen, and which might be summed up in the word “Ulster.” Ulster, they say, is a Protestant and anti-Nationalist province, and could not be put under the dominion of a Nationalist Parliament in Dublin. But let me ask, is Ulster either Protestant or anti-Nationalist? First, is Ulster Protestant? Last year a return was issued by Parliament giving the religious denominations of the population of Ulster. From that it appeared that forty-eight per cent. of the whole population was Catholic, and remaining fifty-two per cent. was made up of all other creeds, and leaving Belfast out, the Catholics were to-day fifty-five per cent. of the whole population. But their case was stronger even than that. It had recently been pointed out that Ulster might well be divided into two distinct portions

—one portion consisting of Antrim and portions of Down and Armagh, containing a majority of Protestants, they being three-fourths of the population; the other portion, consisting of Donegal, Tyrone, Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan, Monaghan, and portions of Down and Armagh, containing a majority of Catholics, they being two-thirds of the population. The exact figures were—in the first portion, Catholics, 188,289; Protestants, 542,862. In the second portion, Catholics, 645,279; and Protestants, 316,647. In the face of these facts, can Ulster truthfully be termed a Protestant province? The right hon. gentleman, the member for West Birmingham, speaks of the necessity of a separate Parliament for Ulster. His object is to protect the Protestants. But surely if any Protestants wanted protection, they were, not those in Ulster, but those in the South and West who were in such a miserable minority. But would a Parliament in Ulster fulfil his object even in that province? Why, unless the entire basis of representation be changed, such a Parliament must inevitably contain a majority of Catholics. Now, let me ask, is Ulster anti-National? The answer is supplied by the returns at the last elections. Out of the nine counties of Ulster only one, namely Antrim, went solid against Home Rule, and if my hon. friend the member for Sligo (Mr Sexton) had secured thirty-eight more votes in Belfast, not even one solitary county in Ulster or in Ireland would have declared against Home Rule. Four entire counties—Donegal, Fermanagh, Cavan and Monaghan—went solid for Home Rule. The remaining four counties—namely, Derry, Tyrone, Armagh and Down—were so divided that the net result was to give the Nationalists a clear majority of the Ulster seats, while Belfast and Derry were only lost by thirty-seven and twenty-seven votes. In the face of these facts it is the utmost folly to speak of Ulster as anti-National. There is one somewhat frivolous matter to which I would wish to refer—the war-like intentions of a certain party in Ireland. I hold in my hand an interesting statement from a well-known gentleman in Ireland. Writing on this subject, he says:—

“If the men of Ulster fight at all it will not be with the rest of Ireland, but with each other. The men of Antrim, Down and Armagh, before conquering Leinster, Connaught and Munster, will have to take in hand the subjugation of the six other Ulster counties. Ditches will have to be lined, not merely north of the Boyne, but west of the Bann—not merely from Belfast to Dublin, but from Belfast to Donegal, and from Armagh to Derry. In short, the idea of the Protestant portion of Ulster conquering the Catholic portion is as absurd as the contention that Lancashire could conquer the northern counties of England. Although there are Orangemen and Protestants in every one of the nine Ulster counties, it is only in Antrim, Down and Armagh that they could assemble in sufficient strength to overawe the local Catholics. However, although it is the wildest nonsense to imagine anything of the kind, let it be understood that the Orangemen in the north-east of Ulster have taken up arms under the command of Major Saunderson and Mr Johnson, of Ballykilbeg, with a view to the reduction and occupation of the remainder of the province as the result of the Repeal of the Union. To begin with, on entering Monaghan the Orange army, or rather mob, would find itself in a country inhabited by 27,000 Protestants and 76,000 Catholics. On pushing forward into Cavan the Orangemen would be amongst 25,000 Protestants and 105,000 Catholics. In Fermanagh, their task of subjugation would be comparatively light, as the Catholics in that county are only fifty-six per cent.; but in Donegal the Orange army or mob, or rather what remained of it, would be simply swallowed up, for in that wildly remote and extensive and inhospitable region, possessing admirable facilities for a defensive warfare, the Protestants are only 48,000 in number, the Catholics being 158,000.”

I ought to apologise for even alluding shortly to this matter, but I have done so for the purpose of enlivening the somewhat tedious character of my remarks. I deeply regret having to speak of Protestants and Catholics in connection with the matter at all. Ours is not a sectarian, but a National movement. If Home Rule were granted the Protestant minority would have equal rights and liberties with their Catholic fellow-countrymen. The truth is, the Catholics of Ireland entertain feelings of deep respect and affection for their Protestant fellow-countrymen. Protestants led the National movements of Ireland for generations. A Protestant Parliament, in 1793, struck the first blow at the Penal Code and commenced the work

of Catholic Emancipation; Protestant patriots shed their blood on the scaffold and in the field in defence of the liberties of their Catholic countrymen; and there is not a single one of the Catholic leaders of the people to-day who would not reject with scorn and derision any settlement of the National question which did not secure for the Protestants of Ireland full civil and religious liberty. Some hon. members in this House—Radicals in principle—object to the first order which, elected on a higher franchise, is to form part of the Irish Legislature under this Bill, as being contrary to democratic ideas. Do they think that we are less democratic than they are, and do they wonder why we accept such provisions? I will tell them. It is because, although we know the fears of our Protestant fellow-countrymen are unworthy and unfounded fears, at the same time we recognise those fears, and we desire by every means in our power to give guarantees to every section and every creed amongst our countrymen, that our sole object in this movement is to build up a united and a prosperous Irish nation. On the details I will not speak further than I have done, and I have only a few more words to say in conclusion.

A passing allusion was made by the Prime Minister in his great speech in introducing this measure to the historic mission of Lord Fitzwilliam to Ireland in 1795. It seems to me that there are many circumstances connected with the present situation similar to the circumstances which attended the mission of Lord Fitzwilliam. At that time the Irish Parliament had commenced the work of Catholic emancipation, and at last Edmund Burke and some others had induced the English Cabinet to adopt a policy of conciliation and emancipation, and Lord Fitzwilliam was the bearer of a message of peace to Ireland, as the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary (Mr Morley) was the bearer of a message of peace to Ireland the other day. The hopes of the Irish people were raised high, and it would be difficult indeed for any man to say how entirely different the whole course of Irish history might have been if Lord Fitzwilliam had been allowed to carry his policy into effect:

but evil counsels prevailed in England—the policy of conciliation, that policy which has since been acknowledged as a policy of justice, was wrecked. The policy of justice was reversed. Lord Fitzwilliam was withdrawn, and a return was made to the old, old policy of repression. Then followed the rebellion of '98, and the many disasters which have marked the connection of the two countries. I don't wish to be a prophet of evil—I don't believe that similar results will follow from the wrecking of this Bill, but remember the words of Henry Grattan when he said:—

“Lord Fitzwilliam is offering to the Empire the affection of millions of hearts.”

I ask you, is the offering of the affection of millions of hearts which the Prime Minister is to-day making to the Empire to be rejected as was the offering of Lord Fitzwilliam? One thing English politicians must make up their minds about, and that is that this question must be settled, and every moment of delay increases the difficulties and dangers of that position. Every speech conceived in a bitter spirit, by either Irishmen or Englishmen, must tend to increase the evils and dangers of the moment. The spirit in which the Prime Minister has addressed himself to the question, the spirit of large-heartedness and justice which he exhibited, has called forth a responsive feeling in the breasts of the Irish people right round the world. If that be the spirit in which Englishmen address themselves to the consideration of this question, then I have some hope for the near future of Ireland. But if passion and prejudice, if forgetfulness of the history of Ireland and impatience at her faults are allowed once again to sway the public mind and to influence Parliament, I confess I cannot look forward to the near future without the gravest apprehension. Should calamity follow an unwise and hasty rejection of this Bill, we, at any rate, will not be responsible, for we will allow no act or word of ours to intensify the dangers and difficulties of the situation. We make our appeal to-day to the newly-enfranchised democracy of England. Eternal will be its honour through

all the ages, and priceless will be its recompense, if its first great work, after achieving its own enfranchisement, should be to fill up the gulf of hatred and distrust which for so long a time has divided the two nations, by a just and a wise concession to that national sentiment in Ireland which, however much some Englishmen may affect to deride it, has yet dominated Irish character for seven centuries, and must be recognised and respected if Ireland is ever to become, as I fervently pray she may soon become, a peaceful, free and contented nation.

IRISH NATIONAL CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

An Irish National Convention was held in Chicago in August 1886. Mr Redmond attended and addressed the meeting on the 18th August.

THE duty which devolves upon my colleagues and myself of representing the Irish nation at home, at this great gathering of the Irish nation abroad, is one in which the honour is great and the responsibility heavy. Perhaps the greatest glory of our nation is to be found in the fact that our people, driven by misfortune and misrule from the land of their fathers, and coming to this land rude, ignorant and poor, have yet been able to bear an honourable part in building up the fortunes of America, and to give to the world undeniable proof that, in addition to the qualities of fidelity and honesty, Irishmen, under a free constitution, can be worthy sons and good citizens of their adopted country. The Irish people in this great republic, no less as American citizens than as Irish Nationalists, have arrested the attention and commanded the admiration of the world. The assembly of this day is a proof of devotion to a great cause, perhaps unparalleled in history.

The hardships, the oppressions, and the miseries which drove you or your fathers from Ireland, have wedded your hearts to Ireland's cause by ties which neither prosperity, nor distance, nor time can destroy or weaken. No selfish interests urge you to support the old cause, devotion to which brought ruin and death upon your forefathers and exile upon yourselves. Selfishness and worldly interests all point to another course as the best; but it is the undying glory of Ireland that her exiled sons, in the midst of prosperity, and in the light of liberty, have yet found time to absent themselves from felicity awhile to tell her story,

and have made it a part of their daily life and nightly dream to help in working out her redemption.

The Irish soldier, whose sword was consecrated to the service of America, dreamed, as he went into battle, of the day when his arm, skilled in the service of his adopted country, might strike a blow for Irish liberty. The Irish business man, who found in one of your gigantic cities scope for his enterprise and for his industry, looked forward to the day when from his store help might go across the Atlantic to sustain Ireland's champions on the old sod. The Irish labourer, whose brawny arms have built your railroads and reared your stately palaces, in the midst of his labours laid aside his daily or weekly mite to help those who were fighting, time after time, with one weapon or another, in the old cause against the old enemies of Ireland. Rich or poor, high or low, alike, the Irish in America have never forgotten the land whence they sprang, and our people at home, in their joys and their sorrows, in their hopes and in their fears, turn ever for help and encouragement and confidence to this great republic, upon whose fortunes and whose future rest to-day the blessings of the Irish race. To assist at this great convention of the Irish nation in America, especially to stand here as we do, as the ambassadors sent here to represent the Irish nation at home, is indeed a supreme honour which we can never over-estimate and can never forget.

But it is also an honour which bears with it indeed an overwhelming sense of responsibility—the responsibility of showing to you that we who are conducting this movement at home are worthy of your confidence, and have a right to claim your continued support; the responsibility also of clearly placing before you the conditions upon which alone we can accept that support or value that confidence. Let me dwell a moment upon these two points. Are we worthy of your confidence, and have we a right to claim your continued support? In order to answer this question satisfactorily we must show, first, that we are guided by the same principle and animated by the same hopes as yourselves; and in the second place, that our

movement is conducted on a wise and honest policy. What is the principle underlying this movement? It is the unquestioned recognition of the nationality of Ireland. We are working not simply for the removal of grievances or the amelioration of the material condition of our people. Nothing, I think, is plainer than if Ireland had in the past abandoned principle, she could easily have bartered her national rights to England, and in return have obtained a certain amount of material prosperity. If only our forefathers had meekly accepted the yoke of an alien rule, Ireland's fetters would have been gilded, and the hand which for centuries has scourged her would have given her, as a slave, indulgences and favours which would have perhaps saved her from sufferings which are without a parallel in the history of oppression. If, at the bidding of England, Ireland had ages since abandoned her religion, and consented to merge her nationality, we might to-day be the sleekest of slaves, fattened by the bounty of our conquerors. Scotland, by even a smaller compromise of her national existence, has secured for herself comparative prosperity. But Ireland has preferred rags and an unconquered spirit of liberty to favours won by national dishonour.

The principle embodied in the Irish movement of to-day is just the same principle which was the soul of every Irish movement for the last seven centuries—the principle of rebellion against the rule of strangers; the principle which Owen Roe O'Neil vindicated at Benburb; which animated Tone and Fitzgerald, and to which Emmet sacrificed a stainless life. Let no man desecrate that principle by giving it the ignoble name of hatred of England. Race hatred is at best an unreasoning passion. I, for one, believe in the brotherhood of nations, and bitter as the memory is of past wrongs and present injustice inflicted upon our people by our alien rulers, I assert the principle underlying our movement is not the principle of revenge for the past but of justice for the future. When a question of that principle arises there can be no such thing as compromise. The Irish leader who would propose to

compromise the national claims of Ireland, who would even incline for one second to accept as a settlement of our demand any concession short of the unquestioned recognition of that nationality which has come down to us sanctified by the blood and tears of centuries, would be false to Ireland's history and would forfeit all claims upon your confidence or support. Such a contingency can never arise, for the man who would be traitor enough to propose such a course would find himself no longer a leader. No man can barter away the honour of a nation. The one great principle of any settlement of the Irish question must be the recognition of the divine right of Irishmen, and Irishmen alone, to rule Ireland. This is the principle in support of which you are assembled to-day; this is the principle which guides our movement in Ireland. But consistently with that principle we believe it is possible to bring about a settlement honourable to England and Ireland alike, whereby the wrongs and miseries of the past may be forgotten; whereby the chapter of English wrongs and of Irish resistance may be closed; and whereby a future of freedom and of amity between the two nations may be inaugurated.

Such a settlement, we believe, was offered to us by Mr Gladstone, and quite apart from the increased strength which Mr Gladstone's proposals, even though temporarily defeated, have given to our cause, we have, I think, reason to rejoice at the opportunity which they afforded to our suffering and exasperated people to show the magnanimity of their natures and the unalloyed purity of their love of liberty. What a spectacle Ireland afforded to the world, when at last one great Englishman arose bold enough and wise enough to do justice to her character! Ages of heartless oppression and bitter wrong, hundreds of thousands of martyrs to Irish freedom, ages of stupid religious persecution, ages of depopulation and state-created famine, never-ending insult, and ruthless calumny—all in that one moment were forgotten, and the feelings uppermost in the hearts of the Irish race at home and abroad were gratitude to the aged statesman who simply

proposed to do justice, and anxiety for a "blessed oblivion of the past." Who, in the face of the reception given to the Bill of Mr Gladstone, cramped and deformed as it was by humiliating safeguards and unnecessary limitations, will dare to say that the principle of our movement is merely race hatred of England?

No! Last April Ireland was ready to forget and forgive. She was ready to sacrifice many things for peace, as long as the one essential principle for which she struggled was conceded. She was willing, on the day when the portals of her ancient senate-house were re-opened, to shake hands with her hereditary foe, and to proclaim peace between the democracies of two nations whom the Almighty placed side by side to be friends, but who had been kept apart by the avarice, the passions, and the injustice of a few. What centuries of oppression had failed to do seemed about to be accomplished by one word of conciliation, by one act of justice.

Almost one hundred years before a similar opportunity arose. The Irish people then demanded Catholic emancipation and Parliamentary reform, and in 1795 Lord Fitzwilliam came to Ireland to carry out a policy of justice. Then, just as last April, the Irish question was on the very brink of settlement. The passion of revenge died out, ancient wrongs were forgotten, faction faded at the approach of liberty, and for one brief moment the clouds lifted over Ireland. But the moment was brief.

Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled, and Lord Camden went to Ireland and deliberately commenced the policy which culminated in the rebellion of 1798. Fatally alike in almost all its details was the crisis of that day to the crisis of to-day. Once again the policy of conciliation has been cast aside by England. The English Viceroy who represented the policy of liberty, and who was the first English Viceroy since 1795 who was greeted with the acclamations of the populace in Dublin, has left our shores, and in his place has come one bearing the hated name of Castlereagh. Once again all thought of amity with England has been banished from the minds of Irishmen, and to-day we are

once more face to face with our hereditary foes. The storm cloud has descended once more upon our land, but we have a right to call on the world to remember, when by-and-by it perhaps shudders at the darkness and gloom and horror of the scene, how brightly and peacefully the Irish landscape smiled during the brief sunshine of the last few months.

The duty of the moment is clear. We have given England the most convincing proof that on the concession of liberty we can be trusty friends; it now remains for us to prove for the thousandth time that as slaves we can be formidable foes. I assert here to-day that the government of Ireland by England is an impossibility, and I believe it to be our duty to keep it so. Were our people tamely to submit to the yoke which has been once again placed on their necks they would be unworthy of the blood which they have inherited from fathers who preferred poverty to dishonour and death to national slavery.

But there is no danger of such a disgrace. The national movement is in the hands of a man who can be bold as well as cautious, and I claim the confidence and support of the Irish in America, not only because they are animated by the same principle and the same hopes as we are, but because our movement at home is conducted on a wise and honest policy. Judged by the test of success, how does that policy stand? Has our cause for one instant stopped in its progress toward triumph? When last you assembled in convention, two years ago, the Irish party in Parliament did not number more than forty; to-day we hold five-sixths of the Irish seats, and speak in the name of five-sixths of the Irish people in Ireland. Two years ago we had arrayed against us all English political parties and every English statesman; to-day we have upon our side one of the great English political parties, which, though its past traditions in Ireland have been evil, still represents the party of progress in England, and the greatest statesman of the day who has staked his all upon winning for Ireland her national rights. Two years ago England had in truth, in Mitchel's phrase, the ear of the world. To-

day, at last, that ear, so long poisoned with calumnies of our people, is now open to the voice of Ireland. Two years ago the public opinion of the world—ay, and even of this free land of America—was doubtful as to the justice of our movement; to-day the opinion of the civilised world, and of America in particular, is clearly and distinctly upon our side. Has the policy which has wrought this change been a success, and are the men who have raised the Irish cause to its present position worthy of your continued confidence and support?

Well, but for the future, what is the policy and who are to be the framers of that policy? Here I come to the second point I mentioned at the beginning—namely, the condition upon which alone we can value your confidence or accept your support. So long as we are true to the great principles of Irish nationality, resolutely refusing either to be bought or coerced from a rigid adherence to the full measure of national right, and so long as we are able to point to our past policy as honest and successful, we say we, and no others, are entitled to decide for ourselves upon Irish soil and upon our own responsibility what our policy for the future is to be. This is the condition upon which you have given your support to us in the past, and it is the condition upon which alone we can accept your support for the future. Of one thing, however, you may rest assured—the policy in Ireland in the near future will be one of fight. The chief of the present English Government recently prescribed as a remedy for Irish discontent twenty years' coercion. He forgot the historical fact that since the Act of Union there had been eighty-six years' coercion, and that the spirit of the people is sterner and higher to-day than ever it was before. For coercion he was quite prepared, and to coercion Lord Salisbury will most assuredly be forced to come, although the policy of the new Government seems to be to try and stave off stern measures for awhile. They will, however, soon find out their mistake.

To the concession of justice and liberty there is no alternative but coercion. To imagine that Ireland could

jog along peacefully for even six months under the rule of the new Castlereagh is to set down our people as cravens or fools. In the coming winter the laws of nature itself will forbid the possibility of peace. For the last six months the tenant farmers of Ireland have played a part too little known and appreciated here. They submitted to untold privations and sufferings and exactions in patience and in silence, lest by one word or act of theirs they should embarrass their leaders in Parliament, or retard by one moment the concession of Home Rule. The landlords of Ireland noted, but totally misunderstood the meaning of the change of attitude. They mistook forbearance and patriotism for cowardice, and the crowbar brigade once more set to work. Still the tenants suffered in silence. Mr Gladstone proposed a Land Bill which would have bought out the landlords at an extravagantly high figure, yet the Irish tenants were ready, because it was coupled with the concession of Home Rule, to pay this exorbitant sum as the price to be paid for national freedom. But all motive for forbearance on their part is now gone, the sands have run through the hour-glass, and the old fight between landlord and tenant must revive if the people are not to be swept out of existence while they are waiting for Home Rule.

Once more Irish landlords have behaved with unaccountable folly and stupidity. They have once more stood between Ireland and her freedom, and have refused even an extravagant price for the land because the offer was coupled with the concession of an Irish Parliament. So be it. I believe the last offer has been made to Irish landlordism. The ultimate settlement of this question must now be reserved for the Parliament of Ireland, and meantime the people must take care to protect themselves and their children. In many parts of Ireland, I assert, rent is to-day an impossibility, and in every part of Ireland the rents demanded are exorbitant, and will not and cannot be paid. The old struggle will be revived, and before three months are over the new Government will be forced, as of old, in defence of the rents of the landlords, to attempt

to forge anew the fetters of coercion. The process will not be an easy one, and even if successful we have no reason to fear the worst they can do. For my part, indeed, I think it but right and fitting, that so long as Englishmen rule Ireland they should be forced to do so by coercion. We have to-day no constitution, and it is well that the mask of constitutionalism should be torn from the faces of our rulers and the fact made patent to the world. In this coming struggle, which we honestly believe will be the final one before victory, we claim the assistance of our fellow-countrymen and the sympathy of all the citizens of this great Republic. Gentlemen, I have now done. The memory of this day will live with me while memory lasts. The effects of the work upon which you have been engaged will, I believe, live and be felt so long as this struggle continues. Your wisdom will guide our policy, your courage will inspire our hearts, your marvellous union will excite our emulation. You have good reason, indeed, to be proud of the proceedings of this day. You are, in truth, engaged in a noble and a sacred work—nothing less than championing the weak against the strong, the helpless against the powerful, the afflicted against the prosperous. You have long since earned for yourselves and your adopted country the blessings of the poor, and rest assured when at last victory sits upon our cause and freedom is again enthroned in Ireland, you also will reap a reward, for the God of the poor and the oppressed, the God of justice and of mercy, will also increase your prosperity and watch eternally over your liberties.

IRISH PROTESTANTS AND HOME RULE

A Lecture delivered in the Rotunda, Dublin,
29th November 1886.

IN choosing a subject for my lecture to-night I have been guided by a consideration which ought, I think, to be present to the mind of everyone who properly appreciates the position in which the National cause is placed at this moment. That cause, which in the time of our own fathers appeared to be a losing one, associated, as it was, with memories of almost unbroken disaster and defeat, has suddenly experienced that turn of fortune which is ever in store for a cause founded upon truth. We have seen the cause of Irish liberty advanced in our day to the very threshold of victory. We have seen our friends multiplying and our enemies disappearing; we have seen the heart of the civilized world touched by the spectacle of Ireland's constancy and devotion, and minds and ears that were long closed by prejudice and ignorance against the demands of Ireland are now open to the voice of reason. Up to the present it has been a blind struggle of might against right. Force, and not reason, has been the guiding principle in the government of our country; but to-day England, if she has not conceded our demand, has, at any rate, laid aside the sword and consented to listen to argument. When once, to a cause founded upon right, the test of argument is thus applied the triumph of justice is assured. The last elections in Great Britain showed Wales and Scotland in agreement with Ireland, and showed England not so much hostile as perplexed, hesitating and doubtful. She was willing to listen and to learn, but she knew not whom to trust or whose story to believe. Her doubts and perplexities alone stand between us and the final triumph of our cause to-day. These doubts and perplexities are, in my opinion, for the

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most part, sincere and honest; and the one great duty of the moment for Irish Nationalists is to explain them away or to satisfy them.

In fulfilment of this duty I have selected my subject for to-night, and instead of speaking simply as a Nationalist to an audience of Nationalists, I prefer to address myself to the task of grappling with one of those difficulties which many Englishmen do honestly see in the way of a concession of Home Rule to Ireland.

The charge made against the mass of the Irish people of religious intolerance is, perhaps, the most insulting accusation which could be levelled against a nation struggling to be free, and, if proved, would go far, indeed, to justify the refusal of free institutions to a people who themselves had not conceived the fundamental ideas of freedom. Such a charge against any nation at this time of the nineteenth century to ordinary persons would seem a little exaggerated; but coming from the people of England against the people of Ireland, such a charge must seem to anyone who knows the facts, and has read the pages of history, little short of absurd and ridiculous. Still, the accusation was freely made against our people during the last elections. The English people were told by statesmen, who well know the contrary to be the truth, that it would not be safe to give Home Rule to Ireland, because Ireland was made up not of one nation but of two, and that the Protestant Irish nation being in the minority would suffer persecution and injustice at the hands of a National Parliament in Dublin containing a majority of Catholics. Absurd as this accusation is, there is reason to believe that it had considerable weight with many Englishmen, and it undoubtedly constitutes one of the difficulties which still stand in the way of the concession of self-government to Ireland. It consequently becomes our duty to expose its fallacy, to show its inherent impossibility, and to appeal to the pages of history in support of our argument.

I propose shortly to prove—first, that there are no two nations in Ireland to-day, and secondly, that all the

history of the past disproves the assertion that Catholic Irishmen ever were guilty of religious persecution, and all the experience of the present shows them to be incapable either of intolerance or bigotry. I assert that there are no two nations in Ireland to-day—that all the people of this land—Catholic and Protestant and Presbyterian—of Celtic, or Norman, or Saxon extraction—are all children of one nation bound together not only by common interests but by common traditions, memories and history. In order to prove my assertion it is necessary briefly to glance at the history of Protestant patriotism in Ireland, and to show how the English Protestant colony became in fact and in substance incorporated with the native Irish, as the Normans had been incorporated with them before, and how what was established as an English garrison in the end became converted into the garrison of the national rights and liberties of Ireland. In tracing this story I will at one and the same time show how much Ireland owes to her Protestant patriots, and how strong are the bonds which unite into one nation Irishmen of every religious persuasion.

From 1691, for nearly one hundred years, the native Catholic masses were penalized and outlawed. They were banished from Parliament and deprived of the franchise; they could not possess property, or practise their religion, or educate their children. Their leaders were in exile, fighting under the standards of foreign monarchs, and those at home in Ireland beaten to the ground were hopeless and helpless. Curiously enough, what went by the name of “the Irish nation” was the colony of English Protestants who had undertaken the government of the country, who had become possessed of the lands of the Catholics, and who were so divided from the masses of the people by religion and sentiment that they seemed to think their only safety lay in forging penal chains for the native Irish. I think no history in the world affords a parallel to the extraordinary result which speedily followed.

Natives and Colonists coalesced. The latter, as Burke said, at length discovered that they had a country and

became as Irish as the Irish themselves. The nation was consolidated by the fusion of the Irish of English blood with the Irish of Irish blood. The manner in which this happy consummation was brought about was characteristic of the treatment which Ireland had ever received from the government of England.

The Protestant colony was expected by England to enslave the Irish nation; but having done so, it was expected also to submit to slavery itself. "Your ancestors," said John Philpot Curran to the Irish Parliament a hundred years afterwards—"your ancestors thought themselves the oppressors of their fellow-countrymen, but they were only their jailors; and the justice of Providence would have been frustrated if their own slavery had not been the punishment of their vice and folly." The Protestant colony had succeeded in completely suppressing the native Irish. It had absolutely excluded the Catholics from power. It had made the executive of the country exclusively Protestant; but when it aspired to freedom for itself, it was speedily taught that it was nothing more than the agent of England, and that the only freedom it could claim was the freedom to oppress and trample on the ancient Irish nation. In point of fact, as soon as the colony had succeeded in enslaving the Irish, England set to work to enslave the colony. The colony had deprived the Catholics of a share in Parliament. England thereupon robbed the Parliament of its independence. The colony had condemned the Catholics to poverty, England thereupon restricted the trade and destroyed the prosperity of the colony.

The claim of the English Parliament to control, direct and bind the Irish legislature was of old origin. Poyning's Law, which enacted that no Bill could be originated in the Irish Parliament until the heads of it had been sanctioned by the English Privy Council, was, it is true, passed so early as 1495. But repeatedly the Irish Parliament had endeavoured with more or less success to free itself from the fetter. In 1640 it asserted its right to legislative independence. Later on, the Confederation of Kilkenny

asserted the same right in a still more unequivocal manner. In 1689 the Parliament of James II. repealed Poyning's Act, and again asserted the legislative independence of Ireland. But after the triumph of William III. the Irish legislature definitely sank to the level of a committee of the English Parliament, and the more the colonists suppressed the liberties of the Catholics, the more England suppressed their own privileges and degraded their own Parliament. In 1699 a fatal blow was struck by England at the commercial prosperity of the colony. The woollen trade was practically suppressed. All exports of woollen cloths were prohibited except to England and Wales, and even this exception was delusive, for heavy duties, amounting to a prohibition, prevented Irish cloth being imported into England or Wales. All trade between Ireland and the colonies was prohibited by the Navigation Laws. Mr Lecky says in his *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* :

“Protestants then began to find that they were as little thought of as the Catholics. The suppression of the woollen trade brought ruin upon twelve thousand Protestant families in Dublin, and thirty thousand in the rest of the country. By her commercial laws England deliberately crushed the prosperity of the Protestant colony of Ireland, drove thousands of them into exile, arrested the influx of Protestant population from Great Britain, and inspired the Presbyterians of the north with a bitter hatred of her rule.”

In point of fact a deliberate system was established to put down alike the political pretensions and the commercial prosperity of the Protestants of Ireland, who then found themselves in this extraordinary situation. They had, supported by England, practically enslaved the Irish people, and in return they were expected to calmly accept the position of slaves themselves. Then there was born in the breasts of those men the first spark of that sentiment of nationality which was destined to win for them and their country commercial freedom and legislative independence, and eventually to weld into one nation Irishmen of all creeds and of all bloods. This spirit at first was very

timid, very narrow-minded and selfish. It never seemed to occur to these men that to constitute a nation, and to assert its independence, the concession of liberty to all Irishmen was essential.

At first their ideas of nationality included only the Protestants of Ireland. We shall see by-and-by how this idea fructified and developed, until in the minds of Grattan and his colleagues, the Irish nation for which they had struggled included their countrymen of every creed. The first evidence of this growing spirit of revolt against English oppression was furnished by the publication of the celebrated *Case of Ireland Stated*, which was a book written by Mr William Molyneux, Member for Dublin University, in which he conclusively proved that England had no legal or equitable right to interfere in the legislation of the Irish Parliament. It was, in truth, as a voice crying in the wilderness. Men were amazed at its audacity, and English statesmen were horrified at what they called its revolutionary doctrines. The book was burned by order of the English Parliament by the hands of the common hangman, but the spirit of which it was an evidence survived, and from that day forward the patriot party amongst the Protestants of Ireland may be said to have existed.

It was at this period of Ireland's history, when the idea of nationality was slowly developing in the minds of the Protestant colony, that there appeared upon the political stage the striking and eccentric figure of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's. Swift was one of the strangest characters in Irish history—an odd mixture of patriotism and narrow bigotry, of genius and eccentricity. He never made the slightest effort to mitigate the persecution of the Catholics; he never for an instant included them in his idea of Irish Nationality; yet he did as much, probably, as any man in history to consolidate the Irish nation; and he not only paved the way for, but he rendered absolutely inevitable, that fusion between the Protestant colony and the native Catholics which, in the end, won independence for the country. He urged the people to

meet the restrictions placed upon their trade by boycotting foreign goods, and advised them to "burn everything English except their coals." He seized upon the question of supplying Ireland with a new copper coinage, as an opportunity for vindicating the independence of the country, and in the *Drapier Letters* he boldly asserted the ideas which were rapidly maturing in the minds of the Protestants. He asserted the legislative independence of Ireland, and the nullity of those measures which had not received the sanction of the Irish Legislature. He avowed his entire adherence to the doctrine of Molyneux; he asserted that Ireland was rightfully a free nation, which implied a right of self-government, "for government without the consent of the governed was the very definition of slavery." In vain England sought to insist upon Wood's halfpence. Swift, in fighting this issue, was fighting the battle of Irish independence. He persevered; he united the people of all creeds at his back, and in the end he carried his point. Speaking of this contest, Mr Lecky says:

"This contest deserves to be placed in the foremost ranks in the annals of the Irish race. There is no more momentous epoch in the history of a nation than that in which the voice of a people has first spoken, and spoken with success. It marks the transition from an age of semi-barbarism to an age of civilisation, from the government of force to the government of opinion. Before this time rebellion was the natural issue of every patriotic effort in Ireland; since then rebellion has been an anachronism and a mistake. The age of Desmond and O'Neill had passed; the age of Grattan and O'Connell had begun."

Swift now became the idol and leader of the Irish people. He taught them their first lessons in self-reliance. He led them to victory when oppression had well-nigh broken their spirit, and when the exile of all their own leaders had robbed them of hope; he held up before their eyes the possibility—soon afterwards to be in part realised—of a fusion of the two sections into one nation; and consequently, in spite of his well-known intolerance and bigotry, he became the most universally popular man in

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Ireland. His ending was singularly tragic. The great controversialist, the energetic patriot, the brilliant wit, sank into his grave in a hopeless state of idiocy.

“Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history
Is second childishness and mere oblivion.”

Swift passed away, but the cause of Irish nationality which he had championed never afterwards passed away from the minds either of the Protestants or the Catholics of Ireland.

Flood then came forward as the leader of the patriotic party; and at one step we may pass on to the history of the Volunteers. In 1778 the Irish Parliament sanctioned the enrolment of a volunteer force for the defence of the country. Mr Lecky thus describes what then occurred. He says:

“Then arose one of those movements of enthusiasm that occur two or three times in the history of a nation. The cry to arms passed through the land, and was speedily responded to by all parties and by all creeds. Beginning with the Protestants of the North, the movements soon spread to other parts of the island, and the war of religions and of creeds, that had so long divided the people, vanished as a dream. The inertness produced by centuries of oppression was speedily forgotten, and replaced by the consciousness of recovered strength. From Howth to Connemara, from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, the enthusiasm had passed and the creation of an army had begun.”

The Irish Volunteers were at first an exclusively Protestant organisation, but so anxious were the Catholics from the first to participate in the movement, that in the City of Limerick, when forbidden to bear arms themselves, they subscribed £800 to purchase arms for their Protestant fellow-countrymen. It was now that public spirit in Ireland began at last to be truly National. Henry Grattan saw in the Volunteers a means of uniting Irishmen, and, owing largely to his exertions, Catholics were at last admitted into the ranks of the National army. Shoulder to shoulder, Catholic and Protestant Irishmen

united to demand free trade and a free parliament. In the words of Flood:—"A voice from America shouted 'Liberty,' and every hill and valley of this rejoicing land answered 'Liberty!'" In 1780 the Volunteers obtained for this country a first instalment of liberty in the concession of complete free trade—that is, the freedom of their trade from all restrictions placed upon it by any authority other than the legislature of Ireland. The next step was the assertion of the independence of the Irish Parliament from interference by England. Day by day the fusion of the English Colony and the Irish nation was becoming more perfect; day by day the fell spirit of sectarian hate was dying out. The Volunteers declared at Dungannon, in Convention assembled, that:

"We hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves, and we conceive the measure of relaxation of the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics to be fraught with the happiest consequences of the Union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland."

And Grattan repeatedly voiced the determination of the leaders of the patriotic party to base Irish liberty upon the recognition of the entire people. In one of his speeches he made this remarkable declaration:

"So long as the Penal Code remains we can never be a great nation. . . . I would not keep two millions of my fellow-countrymen in a state of slavery. I desire not a Protestant settlement, but an Irish nation."

How Legislative Independence was won in 1782 every one knows, and how the Protestant Parliament, having broken its own fetters, set themselves instantly to the task of admitting Catholics to their full rights will never be forgotten. The work of emancipation was slow, but sure. In 1793 Catholics were admitted to the franchise, the grand juries, the professions, and the University; and when, two years later, Lord Fitzwilliam arrived in Ireland we have that nobleman's own authority for the statement, "that the Protestants of Ireland had generally

accepted and approved of a policy of complete and immediate emancipation."

Unfortunately, English statesmen had at this time determined to force a scheme of legislative union upon the country, and they knew that such a policy would be impossible if once the Catholics were admitted within the constitution. Primate Boulter, more than half a century before, had said, "When Papist and Protestant unite, good-bye to the English interests in Ireland." English ministers determined that this union should not take place. Accordingly, the policy of emancipation was wrecked, and an intolerant Irish faction was utilised for the purpose of stirring up religious animosities and driving the people into insurrection. The diabolical plan succeeded only too well, and Ireland was robbed of her Parliament.

But Irishmen do not forget that Protestants won the Parliament of '82; Protestants organised the Society of United Irishmen, and filled its ranks both before and after it became a revolutionary body; Protestants gave the franchise to Catholics in 1793; Protestants led the rebel armies in 1798; Protestants gallantly, but vainly, defended Irish constitutional liberty in 1800.

It is true that all this time there had been an intolerant anti-Irish and anti-Catholic faction in Ireland. The men who in 1793 opposed the claims of the Catholics, who brought about the recall of Fitzwilliam in 1795, whose bigotry and fanatical oppression drove the people into arms in '98, who posed as the English garrison in 1800, and sold their country's liberty, and who from that day to this hour have ever been the despised tools of English misgovernment in Ireland—these men have never risen above the tactics or the aspirations of a faction. The Irish nation, ignoring faction, is bound together by devotion to the land that bore them, by hatred of oppression and love of liberty, and by the memory of the scenes when their forefathers, Catholics and Protestants alike, shed their blood in defence of religious toleration and national freedom.

I now pass to the statement, or rather the prophecy,

that under a Home Rule Parliament the Catholic majority would persecute and oppress their Protestant fellow-countrymen. Grattan once said:—"You cannot argue with a prophet, you can only disbelieve him." In the case of this evil prophecy we can happily in addition apply to it the test of experience and history.

When and where and how have Catholic Irishmen evinced a spirit of religious persecution and intolerance? If it be possible to show, as I contend that it is, that Irish Catholics are almost the only people in the world's history who have never persecuted for conscience' sake, that when they had the supremacy in the past they never oppressed their Protestant fellow-countrymen, and that in matters in which they hold power to-day they make no distinction between men of different creeds—if it is possible to prove all this, what becomes of the evil prophecy of our enemies? There are four distinct times in the history of Ireland when the Catholics possessed supremacy and had the power to persecute and oppress their Protestant fellow-countrymen. These periods were (1) in the reign of Queen Mary; (2) in 1641; (3) at the time of the Catholic Parliament of 1689; and (4) at the present time, when Catholics have sufficient power in the commercial, social and municipal life of Ireland to make a man's creed a disability to him if the spirit of religious intolerance were abroad. Let me briefly deal with these four periods.

In the reign of Mary the Catholics were suddenly restored from persecution to power. They were fresh from oppression, for conscience' sake, of the most horrible character. In England the change from persecution to power was marked by oppression of the Protestants by the Catholics. Mary burned to death her Protestant subjects; but the Irish Catholics did not persecute a single individual, and, on the contrary, it is admitted that the Corporation of Dublin of that day rented seventy-four houses and invited over English Protestant merchants from Bristol, and when Mary's persecution ceased, sent them and their families back safely to their homes. Leland, a Protestant historian, writing on this subject, says :

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"Such was the spirit of toleration that many English families, friends of the Reformation, took refuge in Ireland, and there enjoyed their opinions without molestation."

And a Protestant writer, Taylor, in his *History of the Civil Wars of Ireland*, testifies as follows:

"The restoration of the old religion was effected without violence; no persecution of the Protestants was attempted, and several of the English, who fled from the furious zeal of Mary's inquisitors, found a safe refuge among the Catholics of Ireland. It is but justice to this maligned body to add, that on three occasions of their obtaining the upper hand they never injured a single person in life or limb for professing a religion different to their own. They had suffered persecution and learned mercy, as they showed in the reign of Mary, in the wars from 1641 to 1648, and during the brief triumph of James II."

I pass now to the second period of the Catholic power—namely, 1641. As a sample of what the British electorate were induced to believe last July, it will be interesting to you to hear a few words on this subject from a leaflet issued from Mr Sidebottom, the successful Tory candidate for Hyde:

"Q. Have the Irish ever had Home Rule, and how did they behave?

"A. They murdered every Englishman and Protestant they could lay their hands on in 1641. They were set on by the priests, who said that Protestants were devils and served the devil, and that the killing of them was a meritorious act. Altogether they killed in that year 150,000 Protestants—men and women and children."

This puts in a somewhat exaggerated form a very common accusation in the mouths of your enemies. The story of a wholesale massacre of Protestants in the rising of 1641 has been repeatedly proved to be utterly groundless. Mr Lecky, whose bias cannot be said to be in favour of either the Catholics or Nationalists of Ireland, speaks of it as follows:

"The rebellion only assumed its general character in consequence of the resolution of the English House of Commons, that no toleration should be henceforth granted to the Catholic religion in Ireland. It was this policy that drove the Catholic

gentry of Ireland very reluctantly into rebellion. The rebellion was a defensive war, entered into in order to secure a toleration of the religion of the Irish people. . . . *It may boldly be asserted that the statement of a general and organised massacre is utterly and absolutely untrue.* As is usually the case with popular risings, there were in the first outbreak of the rebellion some murders, but there were very few, and there was nothing whatever in the nature of a massacre. . . . The rebellion was not one due to any single cause, but it represented the accumulated wrongs and animosities of two generations. All the long train of agrarian wrongs from Mullaghmast to the latest inquisitions of Wentworth, all the long succession of religious wrongs from the Act of Uniformity of Elizabeth to the Confiscation of the Irish College under Charles, contributed to the result."

The Protestant historian, Leland, says:

"The Catholic priests laboured zealously to moderate the excesses of war, and frequently protected Protestants when danger threatened them, by concealing them in their places of worship, and even under their altars."

And the history of Dr Bedell, the Protestant Bishop of Dromore, who during a considerable portion of the rising enjoyed the respect of the insurgents, and on his death was followed to his grave by one of O'Neill's regiments, is proof enough of the absurdity and untruthfulness of the story of a general massacre of Protestants.

The rebellion culminated in the assembling of the Confederation of Kilkenny, which was really a Catholic Parliament, and our enemies will search its records in vain for any single measure evincing a spirit of persecution.

I pass now to the third period, that of James's Parliament of 1689. In this Parliament there were only six Protestants members of the House of Commons, and some ten or twelve in the House of Lords. Yet, so far were the Catholics from excluding Protestants as Protestants from Parliament, that six Protestant Bishops sat in the House of Peers, and no Catholic prelate was admitted at all. This Parliament consisted then for the most part of Catholics animated by the memory of the most bitter wrongs. They were the sons of men who without trial and without compensation had been robbed of their estates. The confiscations of Ulster, the fraud of Charles,

the atrocities of Strafford, were to them recent and vivid events. At last, power had changed hands and rested with them. How did they use it? To persecute and oppress? To retaliate for old wrongs? No! The first act of that Parliament was to establish perfect religious equality, and to guarantee to Protestants full liberty of professing, practising, and teaching their religion. On the evidences of religious toleration in the past history of Ireland, Mr Lecky says:

“Irish history contains its full share of violence and massacre, but whoever will examine these episodes with impartiality may easily convince himself that their connection with religion has been most superficial. Religious cries have been sometimes raised, religious enthusiasm has been often appealed to in the agony of a struggle; but the real causes have usually been the conflicts of races and classes, the struggle of nationality against annihilation. Amongst the Catholics at least, religious intolerance has never been a prevailing vice, and those who have studied closely the history and character of the Irish people can hardly fail to be struck with the deep respect for sincere religion in every form which they have commonly evinced. Their original conversion to Christianity was probably accompanied by less violence and bloodshed than that of any equally considerable nation in Europe; and in spite of the fearful calamities which followed the Reformation, it is a memorable fact that not a single Protestant suffered for his religion in Ireland during all the period of the Marian persecution in England. The treatment of Bedell, a Protestant prelate, during the outbreak of 1641, and the act establishing liberty of conscience, passed by the Irish Parliament of 1689, in the full flush of the brief Catholic ascendancy under James II., exhibit very remarkably this aspect of the Irish character.”

The same spirit was displayed by Irish Catholics to the first Quaker mission; and it is recorded that in 1712 James Hoskins, accompanied by several Dublin Quakers, went preaching his doctrines through Connemara, which was exclusively Catholic, without meeting with the slightest molestation. The experience of Wesley, half a century later, was similar. He has recorded in his journal that he found more respectful hearers amongst the Catholics of Ireland than in most parts of England; and he speaks

in warm appreciation of "the tolerant spirit of the Catholics of Ireland."

One word now as to the present and I have done. At the present day Catholics have not the power of persecution by fire or sword; but they possess a supremacy in many directions which, if guided by a spirit of intolerance, could effectually harass and oppress the Protestant population. All the world knows how that power is used. When, in 1873, the representatives of the Irish people met in conference in this room to assert their demand for Home Rule, a resolution was unanimously adopted, and I am glad to remember it was proposed by my own father, in these words:

"While we believe that in an Irish Parliament the rights and liberties of all classes of our countrymen would find their best and surest protection, we are willing that there should be incorporated in the Federal Constitution articles supplying the amplest guarantees, that no legislation shall be adopted to establish any religious ascendancy in Ireland, or to subject any person to disabilities on account of his religious opinions."

From that day to this the Catholic majority has acted upon that principle. The most Catholic constituencies in Ireland return to-day Protestant members to Parliament. Catholic cities elect Protestants to the highest civic honours. Catholic Corporations employ Protestant officials; and last, but not least, the leader of the Irish race, to whom his Catholic fellow-countrymen are bound by the strongest links of personal affection and political devotion, is a Protestant Irishman. No! we Catholic Irishmen repudiate this accusation of intolerance with scorn and indignation. We do not even understand the meaning of the words religious bigotry. By the Irish nation we do not mean any class, or sect, or creed. By Irish independence we mean liberty for every Irishman, whether in his veins runs the blood of the Kelt or the Norman, the Cromwellian or the Williamite, whether he professes the ancient faith of Ireland, or that newer creed which has given to our country some of the bravest and purest of her patriots. We are banded together in a

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struggle for our National rights, and, as a Catholic Irishman, I assert my belief that never again would the Catholics of Ireland lift hand or voice to obtain an Irish Parliament did they not know that the edifice of National freedom which it would raise would be based upon the most perfect civil and religious liberty of every Irishman, of every class and creed.

In conclusion, it only remains for me to say that I trust I have established my propositions to your satisfaction, and to thank you for the indulgent patience with which you have heard me.

THE HOME RULE BILL, 1893

Mr Gladstone introduced his second Home Rule Bill on 13th February 1893. It was substantially the same as the first, with this difference, that while Irish members were excluded from the "Imperial Parliament" by the one, they were retained by the other. The Bill passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords. On the second reading (14th April 1893), Mr Redmond, then the leader of the Irish members who had remained faithful to Parnell after the crisis of 1891, spoke as follows :—

MR SPEAKER,—There was one statement in the speech of the right hon. gentleman (Right Hon. Henry Chaplin) with which I most cordially agree. He described this as a great occasion, and spoke of the gravity of the issue at stake. But I venture to say that no right hon. gentleman occupying the position of ex-Cabinet Minister ever made upon a great and historic occasion, upon the discussion of a great issue, a speech so absolutely flat, stale and unprofitable. That speech scarcely touched upon the great issue at stake. That issue is whether this Parliament will confer upon Ireland the management of her own affairs; whether it will entrust to the people of Ireland a representative constitution, and in a speech occupying the time of the House for an hour and a half the right hon. gentleman never did more than read from quotations the opinion of others on the abstract question. The right hon. gentleman is a type of the English governors of Ireland—the men who have made Ireland disaffected, and who have made the concession of Home Rule absolutely inevitable. Was there, from beginning to end of the speech, a single statement to show that the right hon. gentleman was acquainted with the past government or with the history of the country whose right to self-government he ventured to deny? Was there one generous thought in his speech

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or one spark or glimmer of hope for Ireland? The right hon. gentleman opposes the concession of Home Rule to Ireland, but what is his alternative? It is simply a continuance of the principles of government that have made the name of England a by-word and a reproach among the nations of the world. I do not desire to pursue the speech of the right hon. gentleman. I did hope that it would not be necessary for me in the fulfilment of a duty to myself and to those whom I represent to take part in the debate at this stage of the Bill. The speeches that have been made in the course of the debate have been of two distinct classes. We have had on one side those who have criticised the details of the Bill which should be more properly discussed in Committee, and on the other we have had those who discussed the broad principle of the Bill. This latter class of speakers have been hampered by the consideration that they have been merely repeating for the hundredth time every argument with which the country has been ringing for the last seven years. I do not desire in the observations I have to make to anticipate the Committee stage of the Bill, nor do I want merely to utter platitudes on the principle of self-government; and, indeed, I should have been content to remain silent altogether but for the duty cast upon me by statements made in this House and out of it. It is said that we have refused to accept this measure—that we dispute the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament; that we will make no compromise between what we consider the full measure of right that we are entitled to, and the concession which one of the great parties of the State is willing to make to us. Now, that is a complete misrepresentation. Of course this Bill does not concede to Ireland all that we ask or all that we are entitled to. This Bill is a compromise between the full demands which Ireland has made in the past and that which you are willing to concede to us. The constitution offered is a compromise, and is accepted as a compromise. The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham complains that we do not say that this is a final and immutable constitution. I would ask the right hon. gentleman

what right this House, or what right England has, to ask any such guarantee from us. I say candidly that I do not believe that this measure, if passed into law, will be final or immutable.

I believe this constitution will be a success, and I believe it will be a success because I believe—that will be the reason of its success—that it will develop. In the future, in the working of this constitution, the bonds of freedom will be made wider still for Ireland, and that with the consent of England, as a direct result of the reasonable use of the powers obtained under it. If Ireland shows, as she will show, a real capacity for self-government, this constitution must develop. He would be a rash man, indeed, who would say that the written constitution you now seek to confer is for all time, or is to remain a final and immutable constitution. Let me test this matter. Suppose you put into the Bill a clause saying that it is to be a final and immutable settlement, it would not be worth the paper it would be written upon. The very fact that this Imperial Parliament is, and will continue to be, supreme, if the Act of Union is valid, makes it utterly impossible for any law that it may make to be final and immutable. And, again, suppose that every Irishman alive were to join in giving an undertaking that he would regard the constitution as final, of what value would that guarantee be? No, we cannot bind the future—the future, with its new interests, its wider opinions, and its higher aspirations in the generations to come. In that sense I absolutely decline to give any such guarantee as the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham thinks necessary from those who commend this Bill to the consideration of the country. But that was not what the right hon. gentleman meant. He meant that we, in saying that we will accept this Bill, will do so in bad faith, and with no desire to find in the working of the measure a solution of the Irish question, and that is for the purpose of showing that this measure has designs hostile to the English Government and the Empire. That is what he means. For my part, I disclaim any such intention.

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It is true we decline to pledge ourselves that this must remain a final settlement. It is true we regard this Bill as a compromise and not as a full concession of all we are entitled to obtain, but we wish to accept the measure in a fair, honest and candid spirit; and to work it for all it is worth in the hope and belief that it may put an end to the old chapter of English oppression and Irish resistance. But the right hon. gentleman, the member for West Birmingham, says there is the question of the Imperial Parliament. It is not necessary for me to dwell a moment longer upon that point. I challenge anyone in this House to quote a statement of mine, or any of those associated with me, that so long as we remain partners in the Empire at all, and so long as the Act of Union remains unrepealed, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is to be, or can be, abrogated. We have maintained that the concession of free institutions in Ireland means that you have put trust in the Irish people, and that the interference of this Parliament in the working of those institutions would be absolutely inconsistent. Representative institutions exists in other portions of the Empire. How many of them would exist in six months if this House took into its head to exercise its right as a supreme legislature? The concession of representative institutions to Ireland means that you have made up your minds to let us manage our own affairs, free from the interference of the Imperial Parliament. It is true that hon. gentlemen anticipate that the necessity for interference by this Parliament will cease. That may be. I think it will, for I am one of those who agree with Mr Parnell's opinion, that the Irish people under Home Rule will be shrewd enough to know that any violation of the constitution or oppression by that Parliament will be so many nails driven into the coffin of the constitution, and I do not, therefore, think that the occasion for interference will arise. If it does arise nothing we can say, nothing we can do, nothing that you can put in an Act of Parliament now so long as the Union remains unrepealed, can deprive you of the right to control the Irish Parliament, as you can control the Australian and

Canadian Parliaments, and to check the growth of oppression and injustice.

I do not intend to dwell, even for a moment, on the question of finance. I have nothing to add—I have not been able to add—to my sources of information, and therefore I have nothing to add to what I said on the first reading of the Bill on this point. But the longer these financial clauses have been studied, the more they have been distrusted. It is right we should be perfectly candid in a matter of this kind. I have met no member of any political party whatever in Ireland who has been able to tell me that Ireland could be successfully worked and successfully governed under the financial clauses of the Bill as they now stand; and I would add that if the clauses are to remain in their present form, the Government and their supporters in this House will have to recognise the fact that it will become a horrible responsibility for any Irish representative to accept this Bill as a settlement. No representative can do so unless the Bill contains in the financial portion provisions to enable the Government of Ireland to be successfully carried on. Leaving details on this head aside for discussion in Committee, I pass on to what I take to be the real issue at stake.

The real issue is whether you will make up your minds to confer upon Ireland a representative Government—a Government which will give constitutional expression to the will and the voice of her people. There are two ways in which this great and vital principle might be regarded. There is the Irish way and there is the English way. We look upon the principle as one to be conceded to us as of right. We do not entirely or mainly rest our claim for free representative institutions on grievances. We rest our claim on right. The right hon. gentleman, the member for West Birmingham, thinks that if Mr Pitt had been able to carry Catholic Emancipation the Union would have been popular, and that the passage of remedial measures would have been of equal service in cementing the Irish and English peoples. We look at it from a different standpoint. We do not rest our claim solely or mainly on

grievances. If the government of my country by Englishmen were the best that could have been devised by the wit of man, I would be as strong a Home Ruler as I am to-day. Without exaggeration I believe this—that Irish Nationalists would rather be badly governed by their own countrymen than live under the best English government you could give them. We say that Ireland is a distinct and separate Nationality in point of historic importance. It was a nation long before England. For over 600 years Ireland had her own Parliament, which had an exclusive right to legislate for the Irish people. That Parliament was robbed from Ireland by violence and corruption, and against the will of the people. Do English members always recall that fact?

In 1799, when the Government of the day proposed the Union, that measure would not have been carried had that Parliament been dissolved after the defeat of the Government. But it was not dissolved. The Catholics had been enfranchised years before, but they were not allowed to exercise the franchise. The right hon. gentleman referred to armed insurrection, and said that Ireland was deficient in the qualities that would sustain such insurrection. It is impossible for a country like Ireland, with all the advances of military science, to be ready for armed insurrection, but I assert the spirit of resistance still lives as it ought to live, and is as much alive now as at any time in the last century, and my most fervent prayer is that it will meet with no provocation in the rejection of measures of conciliation or in unworthy taunts such as those of the member for West Birmingham. So much for the Irish way. I know it is of far greater moment to dwell on the matter from an English point of view. From the point of view of most Irishmen this matter is looked at from the standpoint that they are entitled to it by right. How did the facts stand from the other point of view? Here are two countries politically united, yet distinct in history and in nationality. The present Prime Minister spoke some remarkable words on this subject in this House even so long ago as 1866. What is the relation which has existed

between these two peoples? It cannot be denied that it is a record of shame on one side—of resistance on the other; of bloodshed, of wasted treasure, of national dishonour. Has your government of Ireland succeeded? I don't want to go back into history. I won't go further than the Act of Union. You have had famines. You have had armed insurrections. You have been obliged to keep a standing army in Ireland equal to that you had at the Crimea. During the whole of the century you have had a Coercion Act for every year. The right hon. gentleman who addressed the House to-night spoke lightly of coercion, but coercion means the abrogation more or less at different times of the full benefits of the British Constitution. It, therefore, means that during your ninety-three years' rule of Ireland you have had eighty Coercion Acts, each one of them abrogating more or less the full rights of the British Constitution. Ireland's population has diminished. Her material prosperity has disappeared. Your government of Ireland has become a by-word amongst the nations; and finally, at the end of this nineteenth century, which has seen the blessings of liberty slowly but surely reaching almost every subject race in the world, at the end of that century a great English party has been obliged by the Bill now before the House to condemn that union, that system of government which has so utterly failed, and which can only be preserved by the permanent suspension of those rights of constitution such as the right of trial by jury, which it is your boast that you desire to see extended to even the Eastern races under your sway. It seems to me that all this goes to show conclusively that the old system has been tried and has failed—that it has hampered and almost destroyed this Parliament—that the whole world has called "Shame on it"; and whether it be amended by this Bill and by this Government, or by another Bill and another Government I know not, but every far-seeing man must admit in his heart that the day is almost dawning when that system will be replaced by a system based on the affections, the will, and the confidence of the governed.

I notice that the opponents of the Bill have kept them

selves clear from broad considerations and principles such as these. They have taken up rather a policy of fastening on particular difficulties, and magnifying them enormously, in order to frighten public opinion, but they forget that if all the difficulties, probably many, which may follow from Home Rule were increased a hundredfold, they could not by any possibility create as bad a state of things as exists in the relations between the two countries at the present moment. The right hon. gentleman, the member for West Birmingham, fears that after Home Rule Ireland will be disaffected. Does he believe that Ireland is well affected now? He believes that England's difficulty will be Ireland's opportunity after Home Rule. Does he not know that if you reject this measure of concession it will be the darling wish of every Irishman to use all your difficulties as opportunities for advancing the National cause? Has he ever considered what will happen if this Bill is rejected? Heaven forbid that I should indulge in what might be construed by our enemies into menaces. But can any man contemplate with equanimity what consequences may follow if you reject that which has kept Ireland tranquil and crimeless for seven years? We are told that if this Bill passes there will be disturbances in Ulster. Can hon. gentlemen consider the possibility of disturbances in other parts of Ireland if the Bill is rejected? Reject this Bill, wreck the hopes upon which the Irish people have been relying, reimpose coercion, and which of you will undertake the government of Ireland by any form of Constitutional Government whatever? The alternative to the policy represented by the Bill would be not only a Coercion Act, but it would inevitably be a disfranchisement of Ireland and the establishment of a military despotism.

The argument about Ulster is false and misleading. The very name of the Ulster question itself is a false one. There is no Ulster question. There may be a Belfast question—there may be a question of a small corner of Ulster, but it is false to speak of this question as an Ulster question. The present population of Ulster, including Belfast, contains forty-six per cent. of Catholics. Leav-

ing out Belfast, it shows a fair majority of Catholics over Protestants. I deny altogether that every Protestant is an anti-Nationalist. I know something of the means that are used in Ireland to keep up this agitation against Home Rule. You talk of boycotting in the time of the Land League. I say that boycotting has been brought to a fine art by the Unionists of Ireland against any Protestant who is independent enough to declare himself on our side. There are in Ulster, including even Belfast, forty-six per cent. of Catholics, and admittedly the Ulster Catholics are Home Rulers, and with a margin of Protestants in favour of Home Rule I am convinced that at least one-half of the entire population of Ulster is favourable to this Bill. But suppose there are only forty-six per cent. of the population of Ulster favourable to the Bill, how false to speak of this as an Ulster question. Besides that, Ulster is not, as is so often said, the only prosperous province in Ireland. I wish Ulster were as prosperous as Unionist members endeavour to depict her. Belfast is prosperous, and long live her prosperity; but as Belfast has grown in prosperity Ulster has declined. There are nine counties in Ulster, and within the last fifty years whilst the population of Belfast has increased the population of these nine counties has diminished by one million of people. In face of that fact, can it be pretended that the population of Ulster is the only prosperous population in Ireland? That diminution of the population of Ulster is greater than the diminution of the other provinces, and the strange thing is that the decrease in population is not greatest where the people are thriftless Catholic Nationalists—the diminution is less in the Catholic County of Donegal than in those counties which contain a large proportion of prosperous Protestants. I say, that this agitation against the Bill is promoted by a small minority of the Protestants of Ireland. Large masses of the Protestants are, no doubt, frightened by the Bill. I do not wonder at it. They have had in their hands for generations an absolute monopoly of all power and place and patronage. To be born a child of this favoured race in Ireland is to be provided for by some place or position of

emolument from one's cradle. No wonder, then, that large masses of them are against a system which would distribute this patronage, power and influence amongst the people. But whilst these feelings are prevalent amongst Protestants generally, the men who have fomented and instigated this bitter and violent agitation in Ireland against Home Rule are not the general body but a small section comprising the Orange Society.

I would recall to the House the origin of the Society. It sprang into existence in 1795—a fateful and terrible year for Ireland. At that time the Protestant Parliament of Ireland had commenced the work of Catholic Emancipation—commenced it thirty years before your enlightened English Parliament carried it out. That Protestant Parliament of Ireland had at its back in support of Catholic Emancipation the far larger part of the Protestants of the country. Lord Fitzwilliam has declared that at the time of his recall the Protestants of Ireland generally were favourable to Emancipation. But the minority—the unreasoning and fanatical minority amongst the Protestants—used their influence with England, and the beneficent policy of Lord Fitzwilliam was reversed. Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled. This unreasoning minority of Protestants at once formed themselves into the Orange Society, and then by their excesses, their fanaticism, they drove the Irish people to arms. I have here abundant proof of my statement. Lord Cornwallis, writing to the Duke of Portland in July 1798, said:

“The principal persons (*i.e.*, the Orangemen) are in general adverse to all acts of clemency, and although they do not express it, and perhaps are too much heated to see the ultimate effects which their violence must produce, would pursue measures that could only terminate in the extirpation of the great number of the inhabitants, and in the utter destruction of the country. The words Papists and Priests are forever in their mouths, and by this unaccountable folly they would drive four-fifths of the community into irreconcilable rebellion.”

In the same year Lord Cornwallis also wrote:

“The principal personages (*i.e.*, Beresford, etc.) who have long been in the habit of directing the Councils of the Lord

Lieutenants, are blinded by their passions and prejudices, talk of nothing but strong measures, and arrogate to themselves the exclusive knowledge of a country of which, from their mode of governing it, they have in my opinion proved themselves totally ignorant. Religious animosities increase, and I am sorry to say are encouraged by the foolish violence of all the principal persons who have been in the habit of governing this island."

I say there are abundant proofs of my statement that this unreasonable minority, comprising the Orange Society, drove the people into insurrection. Mr Goldwin Smith, who is now a Unionist, and whose voice is received as the voice of a prophet, wrote in his *Irish History and Irish Character* :

"The peasantry, though undoubtedly in a disturbed state, might have been kept quiet by lenity, but they were gratuitously scourged and tortured into open rebellion. These were crimes not of individual ruffians, but of faction—a faction which must take its place in history beside that of a Robespierre, Couthon, and Carriere. The murders by the Jacobins may have excited more indignation and pity, because the victims were of high rank, but in the use of torture the Orangemen seemed to have reached a pitch of fiendish cruelty, which was scarcely attained by the Jacobins. The dreadful Civil War of 1798 was the crime—as a candid study of its history will prove—not of the Irish people, but of the Orange terrorists, who literally goaded the people into insurrection."

This is the faction who in Ireland to-day are the instigators and the promoters of the more violent and unreasoning features of the Protestant agitation against Home Rule. That faction instigated religious differences—one of the greatest crimes that a man could be guilty of. They invoked religious hatreds in order to destroy the Parliament of Ireland, and to-day precisely the same agencies are at work. Religious fears and differences are availed of in support of the Union by men whose fathers' bigotry and intolerance brought about the Union.

It has been said that Grattan's Parliament was a failure. I deny it. Grattan's Parliament in 1793 admitted the Catholics to the franchise, to serve on juries, to the professions, and to the universities, and it was not till thirty years afterwards that this Imperial Parliament completed

the work of Emancipation. That Protestant Parliament was willing to extend liberty to their Catholic fellow-countrymen, and it was the hand of England that interposed between the Protestant Parliament and the masses of their countrymen. The minority of Protestants who opposed Catholic Emancipation in 1793, who got Lord Fitzwilliam recalled in 1795, and whose bigotry and fanaticism drove the people into arms in 1798—these are the men whose lineal descendants to-day are promoters of this unreasoning and violent agitation against Home Rule. These are the men of whom Mr John Bright, speaking in this House, used these words:

“These Ulstermen have stood in the way of improvement in the franchise, in the Church and in the Land question. They have purchased Protestant ascendancy, and the price paid for it is the ruin and degradation of their country.”

What, I ask, is the meaning of this Belfast scare? Do hon. gentlemen really think that the Irish Parliament will at once set itself to the task of destroying Belfast? Why, it is too absurd to argue. Do they really think that the Catholic majority in that Parliament will at once set about persecuting the Protestant minority? A more insulting and humiliating charge was never brought against the people. We are entitled, when that charge is made, to ask our opponents to point to a single period of Irish history when the Irish Catholics were guilty of those acts of oppression which English Catholics were undoubtedly guilty of. There were periods when the Catholics of Ireland had in their hands the power to oppress their Protestant fellow-countrymen, but these periods were marked by a spirit of tolerance displayed by the Catholics towards the Protestants. The reign of Mary was marked by the oppression of Protestants by Catholics in England, including the burning of several Protestants at the stake, but we have it on the authority of the Protestant historians, Leland and Taylor, that in the reign of Mary the Dublin Corporation rented seventy-four houses for the shelter of refugees from the persecution of

Catholics in England. The Protestant writer, Taylor, in his history of the civil wars in Ireland, testifies as follows:

"The restoration of the religion was effected without violence. No persecution of the Protestants was attempted, and several of the English who fled from the furious zeal of Mary's inquisitors found a safe refuge among the Catholics of Ireland. It is but justice to this maligned body to add that on those occasions of their obtaining the upper hand they never injured a single person in life or limb for professing a religion different to their own. They had suffered persecution and learned mercy as they showed in the reign of Mary, in the wars from 1641 to 1648, and during the brief triumph of James II."

The Secretary for Scotland in his speech the other night told us that some very horrible woodcuts, by George Cruikshank, depicting horrible occurrences in Ireland, were being circulated throughout England. The same policy was adopted in 1886. The most atrocious falsehoods and calumnies against the people of Ireland, pictorial and otherwise, were circulated throughout this country. I hold in my hand a publication issued by a Tory candidate and a Tory association, and I will read an extract from it to show the kind of calumny that is being palmed off on the people of England. It is in the form of a catechism, with questions and answers:

"Question—Have the Irish ever had Home Rule, and how did they behave?

"Answer—They murdered every Englishman and Protestant they could lay their hands on in 1641. They were set on by the priests, who said that Protestants were devils and served the devil, and that the killing of them was a meritorious act. Altogether they killed in that year 150,000 Protestant men and women and children."

That is the kind of calumny that is spread by our opponents throughout English constituencies. But what does Mr Lecky say on this question of Catholic oppression—and surely hon. members will listen to Mr Lecky's words as the words of an impartial witness? He writes:

"Irish history contains its full share of violence and massacre, but whoever will examine these episodes with impartiality may easily convince himself that their connection with religion has

been most superficial. Religious crises have been sometimes raised. Religious enthusiasm has been often appealed to in the agony of a struggle, but the real causes have usually been the conflicts of races and classes, the struggle of nationality against annihilation. Among the Catholics, at least, religious intolerance has never been a prevailing vice, and those who have studied closely the history and character of the Irish people can hardly fail to be struck with the deep respect for sincere religion in every form which they have commonly evinced. Their original conversion to Christianity was probably accompanied by less violence and bloodshed than that of any equally considerable nation in Europe, and in spite of the fearful calamities which followed the Reformation it is a memorable fact that not a single Protestant suffered for his religion in Ireland during all the period of the Marian persecution in England. The treatment of Bedell, a Protestant prelate, during the outbreak of 1641, and the Act establishing liberty of conscience passed by the Irish Parliament in 1689, in the full flush of the brief Catholic ascendancy under James II., exhibit very remarkably the aspect of the Irish character."

I am conscious that all this might be met by our opponents saying:—That is not the kind of persecution that we fear. We don't fear that we shall be burned at the stake, but we do fear that there will be a Catholic clerical ascendancy.

You will understand me when I say that I am likely to give impartial testimony on that matter. It is true that in the political life of Ireland the Catholic priesthood wield an enormous preponderating power, but they wield it largely because of the character of the struggle the people are waging. Still I am as convinced as I am of my own existence that the political power—the political supremacy if you like—of the Catholic clergy will not, if it is tried, be used successfully under a free Parliament of the Irish people. Surely the events of the past couple of years in Ireland, instead of giving alarm to the Protestants, should give them some encouragement. The hon. member for Londonderry said in his speech the other night that I ought to be the last man in the House to say a word upon this subject. I say there is no man in this House who has a better right to speak on it. I and my comrades sit in this House as the result of defeating the unanimous

opposition of the priests and bishops of Ireland. There is not one of us who was not opposed, as I was, determinedly, consistently and unanimously, by the entire priesthood of Ireland. Only a few of us have been returned, but I ask when in the past history of Ireland—even when the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham was thinking of giving over education without any restriction to the people of Ireland—when, I ask, was such a spectacle afforded as 70,000 Catholic votes being recorded against practically the open opposition of the whole body of the priesthood of Ireland? I say that it is in that spirit of independence to clerical interference in political matters the Protestants will find in the future their best guarantee and safeguard.

To the Protestants of Ireland generally I will say this—If I believed that Home Rule would mean for the Protestants of Ireland, not the oppression at the stake, which, as you say, is unlikely and impossible—but if I thought it meant the abrogation of one whit of their just, civil and religious liberties, I would, as an Irish Nationalist, oppose Home Rule, and would quit my country whose people had not learned the first principles of liberty. We, Irish Catholic Nationalists, owe too much in our past history to our Protestant fellow-countrymen ever to be guilty of the baseness of betrayal. We do not forget the history of Ireland. We do not forget that it was Protestants who won the Parliament of 1782; that it was Protestants who organised the Society of United Irishmen both before and after it had become a revolutionary organisation. We do not forget that it was Protestants who gave the franchise to Catholics in 1793, that Protestants led the rebel army in '98, that Protestants gallantly but vainly defended Irish liberty in 1800; and we do not forget that every day that has passed since has witnessed the efforts of Protestants to defend and promote civil and religious liberty in the national life of Ireland.

The member for West Birmingham laid great stress on his distrust of the present Irish leaders. He did not, he said, distrust the people of Ireland. The right hon.

gentleman resented the accusation that he had reproached the Irish people with having little of humanity except their form. Now it was not the people of Ireland the right hon. gentleman distrusted, but their leaders. But if he distrusted the leaders he must distrust those who followed them. If he distrusted the people, then he had a right to oppose this Bill; but I ask how long is it since the right hon. gentleman learned this distrust of the Irish leaders? I have abstained from arguments of a *tu quoque* character, which had been too frequent in that debate, but the temptation is irresistible to remind the right hon. gentleman of some incidents in his own past career. One of the reasons for the right hon. gentleman distrusting the Irish leaders was that they had been denounced as “marching through rapine and plunder” by the Prime Minister; but in the year 1885, long after the Prime Minister had denounced them as marching through rapine to dismemberment—long after the right hon. gentleman had made himself perfectly acquainted with them, and at a time when, as a matter of fact, the right hon. gentleman was in the closest and most confidential relations with some of the Irish leaders, there was published an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, which the right hon. gentleman admitted when challenged in that House had been published with his sanction and approval, and the main lines of it could be regarded as his. In that article he said:

“What is the root of Irish discontent? Everyone recognises the existence of great grievances which distinguished the Government of Ireland at the commencement of the century, but many of them had been removed. The tithes have been abolished. Catholic Emancipation has been granted. Religious disabilities have been removed. The Irish Church has been disestablished, and last, and most important, the land laws have been reformed. In addition there has been a large use of Imperial funds and credit.”

And now I would call the recollection of the House to the statement of the member for West Birmingham, that Ireland was improving under remedial legislation, and if only the Prime Minister had let the improvement go on, and had not been in a hurry in 1886, the improvement

would sooner or later have resulted in contentment. But what did the right hon. gentleman say in 1886? The article proceeded:

“The Irish people are discontented still, and probably there is more deep-seated disaffection with the English connection at the present time than at any previous period since the Union. These reforms have all been late. They have been the result of compulsion, not of justice. They have been proposed and carried by a foreign Government. What is needed in Ireland is that Irish legislation should be domestic and not foreign.”

The right hon. gentleman now scoffs at the precedent of Austria and Hungary. What said the article?

“Austria and Hungary have long since settled their differences, yet England persists still in misgoverning Ireland, and has failed to endow her with a constitution that will command the loyalty and affection of the people.”

With what a face does the right hon. gentleman after declarations of that kind come down to the House and declare that the remedial legislation between 1869 and 1885 was gradually weaning the people away from disaffection, and only for the wicked meddler, the Prime Minister, in 1885, by this time I suppose the Irish Channel would have disappeared, or, at anyrate, England and Ireland as two nations would have merged into one harmonious whole. In conclusion, I earnestly impress just one other consideration upon the House. The malady from which Ireland is admittedly suffering is a deadly malady, and the case is urgent. It is not a case that will brook of delay. While doctors are differing the patient is dying. The very life-blood of Ireland is day by day ebbing away from her. Every specific has been tried for the cure of this malady. Every specific has been tried except one, and that is to allow the Irish people to make an attempt at any rate to cure themselves. Her disease is alike of the mind and body. I remember when a very young lad listening in the gallery of the House to a speech on this subject in the year 1876, and I remember Mr Isaac Butt—whose name I, in common with large masses of the

Irish people, will ever recall with reverence and affection—I remember Mr Isaac Butt quoting to the House those noble words in *Macbeth* when Macbeth asked the physician:

“Can’st thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon her?”

And I remember well the effect produced upon the House when Mr Butt went further, and recalled the answer of the physician, who said:

“Therein the patient must minister to herself.”

That is our case for Home Rule. We say that Ireland must minister to herself. Her malady has baffled the most skilful political physicians of this country, has baffled England’s ablest administrators, her wisest legislators, her sagest councillors and statesmen. We say that Ireland’s sole remaining hope is in herself. Ireland herself must minister to herself. She must bind up her own wounds and cure her own disorder. Those who say, as Lord Salisbury has done, that the Irish people, because they were mostly of the Celtic race, were unfitted for the use of representative institutions and for the enjoyment of freedom, made a declaration foreign to the whole experience and history of their Empire. In the creation of the Empire, in the Government of the Empire, in the councils of the Empire, in the exercise of those virtues and talents which were necessary for the practice of the arts of Government, I say that Irishmen have proved themselves equal to the best of Englishmen or Scotchmen or Welshmen. Go round the Empire on which you boast the sun never sets, and I defy you to find one spot where Irishmen have not made an exhibition of those talents and those virtues except one spot—that spot being the land of their birth and affections. I say to the House these great qualities and virtues are not yet extinct in the Irish race.

Give them free scope, throw upon the shoulders of the people the sobering influence of responsibility—give them free scope, give them the bracing influences of a free constitution, and I am as convinced as that we are assembled in this Parliament to-day, that the Irish question, which for a hundred years has been the torture and disgrace of this so-called united Imperial Parliament, will in a few short years trouble them no more, and Ireland—poor, depopulated, scourged, rightly-disaffected Ireland—will be converted from what she is to-day, alike England's weakness and England's shame, into a portion of the Empire, which if not as prosperous and rich as happy England, will at least be as contented, as peaceful and as free.

THE ROSEBERY MINISTRY AND HOME RULE

The Home Rule Bill of 1893 passed the Commons but was rejected by the Lords. After this defeat it was the wish of Mr Gladstone to appeal immediately to the country, but his Cabinet would not let him. In 1894 he ceased to be Prime Minister, and was succeeded by Lord Rosebery. Speaking in the House of Lords the new Prime Minister used the following words in reference to Home Rule:—

“The noble Marquess made one remark upon the subject of Irish Home Rule with which I must confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament, England, as the predominant member of the partnership between the three kingdoms, will have to be convinced of its justness.”

On the 13th March Mr Redmond addressed the House of Commons, directing attention to the speech of Lord Rosebery and the position of the Government.

MR J. REDMOND (Waterford): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have often had occasion to feel for the difficulties of the position occupied by the right hon. gentleman as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Those difficulties have been enormous, but I confess that I do not think that during his experience a more difficult or—if I might be permitted to say so without offence—a more humiliating task ever fell to him than when he found himself put up on this occasion to try and remove by the strength of his own character for friendliness to Ireland the bad impression which has been created by the ambiguous and halting phrases on this Irish Question used by his own new Chief yesterday in another place. I had hoped I would not have found it necessary to take part at all in the general discussion on the Address from the Throne,

and I had intended to have waited for a later stage to move the amendment of which I had given notice; but events have taken such a turn that I feel bound to let that Amendment be moved by some other member and to intervene at once in the discussion in order to give expression to the dissatisfaction, the distrust, and the alarm which has been inspired in my mind, at any rate, by the declarations that have been made recently by Ministers and as much by what they have not said as by what they have. We recognise, of course, the fact that as the Home Rule question stands at this moment we cannot, in Ireland, hope to have it carried into law without another General Election, and without a verdict being given in its favour by the people of these kingdoms. But the one thing we were afraid of was that that appeal to the constituencies would be indefinitely postponed, and while indefinitely postponed the Home Rule Question would be put on the shelf and shifted back from the position of urgency to which it had been raised by the labours and sacrifices of the late Mr Parnell, and that Ireland would find, as the necessity in the minds of Englishmen for considering this question disappeared, that the chances of obtaining a settlement of it would recede altogether from their view. Some of the dangers which we foresaw from such a change of policy have already arisen. The Leadership of the English Home Rule Party has passed from the right hon. Member for Midlothian, whose pledges have been explicit and clear, into the hands of men of whom I must say that we have no strong faith in their devotion to the cause of Home Rule, and whose declarations upon the subject have been halting and ambiguous. I do not refer to the Chief Secretary in these observations. He will not, perhaps, take it as a compliment for me to single him out. But I have never thought that he entertained anything else than an honest desire to prosecute this cause, and I am convinced that he would not lend himself permanently to any plan for defeating the hopes of Ireland. But it is perfectly clear, from the speeches of the new Prime Minister (Lord Rosebery) and the Leader of the House of

Commons last night, that the Home Rule Bill will not be introduced again into either House of Parliament during the existence of this Parliament. If I am wrong in this the right hon. gentleman can easily contradict me, and say that if the Government in their wisdom decide to postpone the appeal to the constituencies they will re-introduce the Bill, and thus keep it as an urgent subject before the public mind. But they have made no such declaration, and it is clear that the intention of re-introducing the Bill in this Parliament has been abandoned. It is also perfectly clear that the life of this Parliament is to be prolonged indefinitely. The Leader of the House said last night that the Dissolution would take place when the time is ripe, and the time apparently will be ripe when the whole of the Newcastle Programme shall have been sent up to the House of Lords. The official organ of the Liberal Party, *The Daily News*, says to-day that the phrase as to the Dissolution taking place when the time is ripe means that a Dissolution is only to take place when every item of the Newcastle Programme has been passed by a majority in this House, and submitted to the House of Lords. This Parliament is to last until this House has passed Welsh and Scotch Disestablishment, and, I suppose, the Local Veto Bill. In face of all that, how anyone can pretend that the life of this Parliament, according to the present intentions of the Government, is not to be indefinitely prolonged, and Home Rule, during that time, put upon the shelf, passes my comprehension. If matters stood there the situation would be serious enough from the Irish point of view, and in my opinion it would be intolerable. This Home Rule Question is urgent; you have said on hundreds of platforms in England that it is urgent and will not brook delay. You have even said that it was so urgent that no reform for the Liberal Party or English people could be carried until the Irish Question was first settled. The right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary (Mr Morley) complimented my hon. friend the Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin on the moderate and reasonable character of his statements with re-

ference to this Session. I submit that we have never taken up an unreasonable attitude in this matter. If the Government believe that they will have a better chance of winning the General Election if they pass certain English Bills, or if these Bills are rejected by the House of Lords, well and good. They have already passed one of those Bills, and another of them has been rejected by the House of Lords. The Government have now this Session before them. I presume that the Evicted Tenants Bill will be the first measure dealt with this Session, although that is not yet certain, because *The Daily News*—in the silence of the Ministers upon the point I must quote their organ—said the other day that the fact that the Evicted Tenants Bill was the first mentioned in the Queen's Speech did not mean that it would be first dealt with. But that Bill will not occupy a long time, and you will have the remainder of the Session in which to pass a Registration Bill. At the end of that time, if you are not prepared to keep the Home Rule Question alive by bringing it into the House of Commons again, you can then dissolve Parliament, having passed your pressing English Bills, or having got, in consequence of their rejection elsewhere, your grievance against the House of Lords. What we ask for is a declaration of intention upon these points. At present we only know two things. The first is that Parliament will not be dissolved, and the second that the Home Rule Bill will not be heard of again in this Parliament. That position is an absolutely intolerable one from the Irish point of view, and it is impossible to avoid the reflection that an extraordinary change has come over the fortunes of the Home Rule cause since the days when the cry, "Ireland blocks the way," was heard on Liberal platforms. The Leader of the House of Commons said last night that Home Rule hung up was at any rate better than coercion in operation. The right hon. gentleman sketched out a comfortable little programme for his Party in Ireland for the next few years, its items being Home Rule hung up, Ireland absolutely peaceful and contented, the Irish Members trustful and faithful, and British

Liberal measures quietly passed into law with the aid of those Irish Members. What occurs to me is that that is an exceedingly pleasant and profitable programme for the Liberal Party, and if it came into operation the temptation would be irresistible not to disturb that programme by taking down Home Rule from the shelf on which it had been placed. But the situation is really far worse than this, because it appears from the declaration of the Prime Minister last night not merely that Home Rule is to be shelved and a Dissolution indefinitely postponed, but that after the next General Election, even if the Liberal Party should obtain a majority in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and in Great Britain, we are not to get Home Rule unless, forsooth, there should be a majority of English Members in its favour. I listened most attentively to the Chief Secretary's defence of his Chief in the other House. The right hon. gentleman does not like the expression, "hanging up of Home Rule," and his phrase is "the temporary suspension of the prosecution of Home Rule." He congratulates himself on the fact that this "temporary suspension of the prosecution of Home Rule" had not had a bad effect in Ireland. Ireland, he says, is still peaceful and trustful; Ireland is still crimeless. What is the almost necessary inference to be drawn? That if Ireland was not peaceful, trustful and crimeless it would be more difficult for you to persist in your "temporary suspension of the prosecution of Home Rule." The right hon. gentleman says that the Prime Minister after all ought not to be taken too seriously ("No! No!") Yes, these were his words; and he says it ought to be borne in mind that the Prime Minister spoke in the House of Lords. He also says that he does not complain that the Irish Members should be suspicious even of a whisper. A whisper is his convenient description of the first official speech of a new Prime Minister. But what is the right hon. gentleman's explanation of Lord Rosebery's extraordinary statement? He says that Lord Rosebery did not mean what the words he used ordinarily mean—that he did not mean that a majority in England for Home Rule would be necessary.

and adds that after all it can be of no avail to submit Home Rule Bills to the Lords until some further progress shall have been made with the conversion of England. In view of this explanation I will ask leave to read the words that were used by Lord Rosebery.

Mr LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I rise to order. I wish to know whether it is in order to quote in this House the words of an English Minister spoken during this Session in the House of Lords?

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I cannot say that the hon. and learned Member is out of order.

Mr J. REDMOND: It would be unfair to prevent me from reading the whole passage, considering that the Chief Secretary was allowed to read half of it. This is what the Prime Minister said:

“The Noble Marquess made one remark upon the subject of Irish Home Rule with which I must confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament, England, as the predominant member of the partnership between the three Kingdoms, will have to be convinced of its justness.”

I repudiate this idea of predominant partnership. If Ireland is to be a portion of the United Kingdom she must be so on an equal footing with England, and it is a preposterous and insulting doctrine to say that the votes of Irishmen as partners in the Empire are not of the same value as the votes of Englishmen, Scotchmen or Welshmen. Lord Rosebery goes on:

“That may seem to be a considerable admission to make,”

—for apparently the Prime Minister was aware that he was making an important political pronouncement—

“because your Lordships will know that the majority of English Members of Parliament, elected from England proper, are hostile to Home Rule.”

Then comes the ground and the hope on which Ireland is to remain quiet and satisfied during the remainder of the years of this Parliament, for Lord Rosebery continues:

“I believe that the conversion of England in regard to Home Rule depends upon one point and one point alone, and that is the conduct of Ireland herself. I believe that if we go on showing this comparative absence of agrarian crime ; if we can point to the continued harmony of Ireland with the great Liberal party ; if we can go on giving proofs and pledges that Ireland is entitled to be granted that boon which she has never ceased to demand since the Act of Union was passed, I believe that the conversion of England will not be of a slow or difficult character.”

In the face of the only hope for Ireland being that she is to go on indefinitely on good behaviour and in trust and loyalty to the great Liberal party, can anyone truthfully say that the position of the Home Rule cause has not altered enormously since the time when the aged leader of the Liberal party declared throughout Great Britain that the question of Home Rule must be settled because it blocks the way, and because the Liberal party would not be able to achieve any reforms until Ireland had been satisfied? It would be idle to pretend that the effect of the statement of Lord Rosebery has been modified or removed by the chivalrous speech of the Chief Secretary. The speech of the Prime Minister in my opinion entirely changes the whole aspect of the Home Rule question. If Lord Rosebery is right in his view about the English majority then the House of Lords were right in rejecting the Home Rule Bill. We were promised that if the Lords dared to reject the Bill, all Great Britain would be made to ring with a cry for the abolition of the House of Lords. We were promised, that under such circumstances the Government would at once pass the Bill again in an autumn session, and send it again to the Lords, and that if the Lords dared again to reject it all England should be made to ring with their misconduct. Was all that talk mere moonshine? We know that the promised agitation did not come off—that not even a Parish Vestry passed a resolution denouncing the House of Lords for rejecting the Bill. We know, too, that if Lord Rosebery is right about this English majority then all this talk about the House of Lords and about the agitation against it must have been mere

hollowness and insincerity, then not only is Home Rule hung up in this Parliament, but no Government can ever seriously introduce another Home Rule Bill until an English majority in its favour has been first obtained. Ireland, North and South, may be united as one man in favour of Home Rule, and Scotland and Wales may be united in favour of it, and it may be a just thing to grant; yet according to the doctrine of Lord Rosebery, Ireland is not to have it if there is only a majority of one among the representatives of England opposed to it. (Ministerial cries of "No.") I know that hon. gentlemen opposite do not like to believe that that is Lord Rosebery's view. I do not like to believe it, but I have read his words, and those words are plain and distinct. I denounce this change of attitude as a backing out on the part of Lord Rosebery on this Irish question—as the abandonment of the position taken up by the right hon. Member for Midlothian on this question of Home Rule, and I say that the declaration about England being the predominant member of the partnership is humiliating and insulting to Ireland. I know that the views of Lord Rosebery on this matter do not coincide with the declaration made by his colleagues at other times. In reading to-day one of those incisive and vigorous speeches which the Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt) is in the habit of making, I find that the right hon. gentleman in August 1892 denounced in this House the present leader of the Opposition (Mr Balfour) because he had ventured to say some time ago what Lord Rosebery has now said in the House of Lords. The Home Secretary said:

"What does the right hon. gentleman mean? It is not disputed, as I have said, that we have a majority of the whole of the electors of the United Kingdom. It is not disputed that in three of the four component parts of the United Kingdom—namely, Scotland, Ireland and Wales—we have a majority also. 'But,' says the right hon. gentleman in effect, 'notwithstanding that majority of yours I am entitled, speaking in the name of the people of England who have cast their votes the other way, to claim to ignore and over-ride the opinion of the mass of the people of the United Kingdom, or even, if need be, to

summon to my aid that pliable instrument which the Constitution has placed at my disposal for the purpose of making the will of the English minority prevail.' I protest in the name of sound constitutional principles against this disintegrating and anarchical doctrine. I protest in the name of the unity of this still United Kingdom against this fantastic development of an abstract Separatist logic. So long as we have an Imperial Parliament, and so long as in that Imperial Parliament, as I trust and believe will always be the case, every part of the United Kingdom is represented, so long the Government and the policy of the Government must be determined by the vote of the majority. Yes, by the vote of the majority; and by the vote of the majority I mean a majority of the whole. Under the right hon. gentleman's theory England is to have all the advantages of the most extreme form of Home Rule without any of the counterbalancing checks and safeguards of Imperial control."

It is an interesting question for us to determine whether the Home Secretary is still of that opinion and whether in expressing that opinion he expressed the opinion of the Government, or whether the opinion of the Government is now represented by its titular head, the Prime Minister? So far as we are concerned, it is utterly impossible for us to overlook this extraordinary and deliberate statement made in the House of Lords yesterday. One word more and I will have finished. There is another matter about which we have heard absolutely nothing in any of the Ministerial statements, and that is whether Lord Rosebery, in speaking of Home Rule, means the same thing as the Chief Secretary and the same thing as we mean. Does he mean the Home Rule Bill which was passed through this House last year? I notice that neither he nor the present Leader of the House has said one single word about standing firmly by that Bill. On the contrary, we have had many disquieting circumstances on the matter. We know the views of the Leader of the House—at least we know them from time to time. We know that he was a thoroughgoing Home Ruler in 1886, but after the Parliamentary crisis he made a speech in which he denounced Mr Parnell's ideas of Home Rule as Fenian Home Rule. Yet last year he supported a Bill which contained almost all the prominent demands Mr Parnell put forward. Has the right hon. gentleman gone

back to his ideas of Fenian Home Rule or not? He has said nothing to us as to what kind of Home Rule he is now going to stand by. And what Lord Rosebery has said is worse than silence on the question, because he sounded the note of compromise so far back as the second reading of the Home Rule Bill last year. He clearly showed that his view of the settlement of the question was a compromise on that Bill. The Irish Members accepted the Bill, but avowedly and openly, as a compromise upon what they considered they were entitled to. It therefore comes to this—that Lord Rosebery's ideas of a settlement of Home Rule is a compromise on that compromise. If that be so then I say that the situation of the question is a lamentable one from an Irish point of view. What was the phrase used by Lord Rosebery last night? It was "Local self-government for purely local affairs." He would not trust himself apparently to use even the words "National self-government" or "Home Rule" or "Autonomy." By "Home Rule" we Irishmen mean something more than a purely local self-government for purely local affairs. We mean by "Home Rule" a government which would be consistent with the supremacy of this Parliament, and with our position in the Empire, a National Government with something of the pride and the honour attaching to a National Government and a National Parliament; and therefore I say that the silence of the Leader of the House as to what he now means by Home Rule, and the words used by Lord Rosebery last night, are calculated to inspire us with suspicion and with doubt. All I have to say in conclusion is this: If it be the plan of the Government to put this question conveniently on the shelf for the next three or four years, and to go on quietly and smoothly here with English Bills, just as if no Irish question were clamouring for settlement at your doors, just as if Ireland were prosperous, contented and happy, and if it be their belief that Ireland will acquiesce in that view and maintain this peace and order and tranquillity which they desire, I think they will find they are living in a fool's paradise. For my part, I have

no doubt whatever in my mind that as soon as the Irish people realise that this is the programme of the Liberal party a spirit will arise in Ireland which will make the Government of Ireland by England at all, on the predominant partner theory at anyrate, an absolute impossibility; and for my part, if this is the programme of the Liberal party the sooner that day comes in my opinion the better.

FIFTEEN YEARS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

A Lecture delivered in the Broadway Theatre, New York,
on 29th November 1896.

I CANNOT but feel that there must seem something almost presumptuous in my coming before an American audience to tell them anything about the English Parliament. America is so enlightened, so intellectually keen about everything which is going on throughout the world—the American Press casts so piercing a search-light around the globe, that the average American probably knows as much of our institutions and life in Europe as we do ourselves. Your newspapers spread before you every morning a record of the world's doings—even its most hidden things—the secrets of Cabinets, the private treaty of kings, the schemes of armies, the inner personal history of political manœuvres, to say nothing of the comedies and tragedies of society.

In coming to speak to you therefore on the subject which has been suggested for my lecture to-night, I am oppressed by a double sense of difficulty and doubt. First, I feel that I shall find it hard to tell you anything about the English Parliament which you have not already been told in a more interesting way by those Argus-eyed correspondents whom your great newspapers keep in London; and on the other hand I am oppressed by the consciousness that—strange as the confession may appear from a politician—this is a form of public speaking to which I am quite unaccustomed.

I could advocate without too much hesitation the cause for which I have done my best to fight during the past fifteen years in the House of Commons; that is to say, I could readily strike a blow in the fight—that comes naturally to a fighter—but to describe the scenes and

incidents and personalities of the fight is another matter. However, I suppose my justification is, after all, that I *have* been in the fight, taking part in it and can say of it "*pars exigua fui* "; and perhaps the point of view of a man so situated towards the events he speaks of is not without an interest of its own.

Cardinal Newman in one of his essays says the Houses of Parliament are a sort of "University of Politics."

"A member of the Legislature," he says, "if tolerably observant, begins to see things with new eyes even though his views undergo no change. He learns a vast deal in public speeches and private conversations which is never put in print. The bearing of measures and events, the action of parties and the character of friends and enemies are brought out to the man who is in the midst of them with a distinctness which the most diligent perusal of the newspapers will fail to impart to them."

Looking at it in this way it is possible that what I have to say may not prove superfluous or unwelcome to you. On my side I will enjoy as a pleasant interlude this rare opportunity of standing aside from the dust and heat of the strife and contemplating it as a spectator.

The House of Commons throughout its long and chequered history has most of the time been a true reflex of the mind of the English nation, and its attitude at different periods towards men and towards events has generally been the attitude which the nation at large assumed. During my short time I have seen it change again and again in its way of regarding and feeling towards certain men and certain events, and I have seen the British nation invariably follow or at least keep time with its varying phases.

I propose to-night, with your permission, to tell you something of my experiences of some of the great and remarkable Englishmen with whom it has been my lot to be in political relations during the past fifteen years. I shall have something to say of Gladstone and Disraeli, of Bright, of Churchill, and others, but in the first place it will be necessary for me to explain briefly to you the extraordinary political situation which existed in the House

of Commons when I first entered its walls, and to draw a picture for you, as briefly as may be, of perhaps the most remarkable figure which ever appeared in that assembly—I mean Charles Stewart Parnell.

When I entered Parliament, fifteen years ago, the British public was in the very midst of one of the most desperate of the Irish crises. An Irish leader had arisen who had taken a new way of obtaining redress for Ireland. Mr Parnell found that the British Parliament insisted upon turning a deaf ear to Ireland's claim for justice. He resolved to adopt the simple yet masterly device of preventing Parliament doing any work at all until it consented to listen. In this policy he was successful. He was the first man who, as Wendell Phillips afterwards said of him in Boston, made John Bull listen to the voice of Ireland.

The task he had undertaken was a desperate one—and at first all the odds were against him. He was in a small minority in his own party. Isaac Butt, the leader of the Irish Party, a great orator and constitutional lawyer, commanded the allegiance of four-fifths of the Home Rule Members and had denounced the new policy as mischievous and insane. Parnell himself was young, inexperienced, not gifted with an Irish fluency of speech, but, on the contrary, weighted with a halting delivery almost painful to listen to. All the men of brilliant Parliamentary talent amongst the Irish Members were against him. On his side were only a handful of young untried and inexperienced Members. More than all, perhaps, he had the unwritten laws and traditions of the House of Commons to combat. On the other hand, however, he had to sustain him the sympathy of the masses of the Irish people, and he speedily found within the four corners of the rules and orders of the House ample room to obstruct public business and to paralyse the legislative machine. With consummate skill, he and Mr Biggar fastened upon those questions in particular which were likely to command a certain amount of sympathy from the more extreme Radicals. They fought the Prisons' Bill in the interest of a more humane treatment of prisoners, and especially in order to obtain a dis-

inction between the treatment of political offenders and ordinary criminals. They fought the Factories' Bill in the interest of the workmen and workwomen. They raised the question of flogging soldiers in the British Army, and eventually succeeded in securing its abolition. They resisted the South African policy of absorbing the Transvaal, and by all these questions they attracted a certain amount of sympathy and support from English Radicals. But their efforts did not end there. They interfered systematically in every single detail of Parliamentary business. Nothing was too large or too small a question for discussion. Night after night they talked by the hour upon every subject that arose, until the astonished Legislature suddenly woke up to the fact that by the action of this handful of young Irishmen the entire legislative machine has been brought to a standstill. Then there burst over the heads of Mr Parnell and his friend a perfect storm of abuse, hatred and passion. Their rising to address the House was invariably the signal for an outburst of howls of execration, and Mr Parnell in particular often stood for half an hour at a time before he could utter a word. But he proved himself perfectly insensible to such methods. He cared neither for the praise nor the abuse of this British Parliament. His object was to injure it so long as it refused to listen to the just claims of his country. If the House groaned, he smiled and paused until the groans were over. If the House was turbulent, he remained calm. He spoke always reasonably, always at great length. By degrees he came to be feared almost as much as hated. Again and again he and Mr Biggar were expelled from the House. The next day they invariably returned and calmly resumed their tactics. On one famous occasion Mr Biggar spoke for four hours. At first Members indulged in the usual interruptions, and seeing that Mr Biggar rather welcomed them as affording him a pleasant rest, they adopted another plan to discourage him and left the House in a body, some half-dozen only of their number remaining. Looking in an hour later, they found him still on his legs, reading long extracts from Blue Books to empty benches.

An hour later he was still talking. After three hours the Speaker attempted to cut him short. There is a rule of the House that every Member must make himself audible to the Chair, and Mr Biggar's voice had grown weak and husky. "The Hon. Member is not making himself audible to the Chair," said Mr Speaker Brand. "That is because I am too far away from you, sir," said Mr Biggar, who immediately gathered together his books and papers, and picking up his glass of water walked solemnly up the floor of the House and took up a position within a yard of the chair. "As you have not heard me, Mr Speaker," said he, "perhaps I had better begin all over again."

Parliament thus lay absolutely at the mercy of this new policy, and Liberals and Tories alike threw all considerations of party aside, and devoted themselves to the task of devising some new rules to rescue the House of Commons from destruction.

All this was witnessed with beating hearts by the people of Ireland. Hope in Parliamentary action revived, and day by day Mr Parnell's power grew. Mr Butt had died. His successor, Mr Shaw, was politically a cipher, and the General Election of 1880 saw Mr Parnell safely installed as leader of the Irish Nationalist party, and his policy enthusiastically adopted by the people. While these events had been occurring in Parliament the Land League movement had sprung into life in Ireland, and almost the first work which the new House of Commons, under Gladstone, was asked to undertake was the passage of a Coercion Act suspending the Constitution and abolishing Trial by Jury. All England was ablaze with excitement. Mr Parnell and his party were engaged in a life-and-death struggle in the House of Commons to prevent the passage of the measure. It was at this moment that I was first elected to Parliament.

At the moment when the Sheriff declared me duly elected, the House of Commons had already been sitting continuously for some twenty-four hours. The brunt of the fight against the Coercion Bill was being borne by

some dozen of Mr Parnell's most active supporters, and they were looking anxiously for my election to send them a recruit. I received a wire urging me not to lose an hour in crossing to Westminster. I started at once, and travelled all night to London. On my way I received another wire saying the House was still sitting. I reached London about seven o'clock on a dark and cold winter's morning. I drove straight from the station to the House of Commons, and it was thus travel-stained and weary that I first presented myself as a Member of the British Parliament. The House was still sitting—it had been sitting without a break for over forty hours. I shall never forget the appearance the Chamber presented. The floor was littered with paper. A few dishevelled and weary Irishmen on one side of the House, about a hundred infuriated Englishmen upon the other; some of them still in evening dress, and wearing what once were the white shirts of the night before last. Mr Parnell was upon his legs, with pale cheeks and drawn face, his hands clenched behind his back, facing without flinching a continuous roar of interruption. It was now about eight o'clock. Half of Mr Parnell's followers were out of the Chamber snatching a few moment's sleep in chairs in the library or smoke room. Those who remained had each a specified period of time allotted to him to speak, and they were wearily waiting their turn. As they caught sight of me standing at the bar of the House they sent up a cheer of welcome. I was unable to come to their aid, however, as under the Rules of the House I could not take my seat until the commencement of a new sitting. My very presence, however, brought a sense of encouragement and approaching relief to them, and I stood there at the bar with my rough travelling coat still upon me, gazing alternately with indignation and admiration at the amazing scene enacted before me. Here then was the great Parliament of England. Of intelligent debate there was none. It was one unbroken scene of turbulence and disorder. The few Irishmen remained quiet, too amused, perhaps, or too much exhausted to retaliate. It was the Englishmen—the members of the first assembly of gentlemen in

Europe as they love to style it—who howled and roared and almost foamed at the mouth with rage, at the calm and pale-faced young man, who stood patiently facing them and endeavouring from time to time to make himself heard. The galleries were filled with strangers every whit as excited as the Members, and even the ladies' gallery contained its dozen or so of eager spectators. No one knew what was going to happen. There was no power under the Rules of the House to stop the debate, it had resolved itself into a question of physical endurance, and it seemed as if the Irishmen, battling for the liberties of their country, were capable of resisting until the impotence of the House of Commons had covered it with the contempt and ridicule of Europe.

At last the end came suddenly and unexpectedly. At eight o'clock, Mr Speaker Brand, from a sense of duty, as he said, and acting on his own responsibility, and in defiance of the Rules of the House, ordered the debate to end.

The correspondent of a great English newspaper thus described the scene:

“Amid breathless silence the Speaker began to read from a paper which trembled like an aspen leaf in his hand. For all his grave and stately quietude the Speaker is a nervous man, and always brings to the performance of his duty a disturbing consciousness of its momentous character. The task he was now engaged on was enough to shake the nerves of a stronger man. Never since Cromwell entered the House, at the head of his men-at-arms, had regular Parliamentary procedure been subject to this swift and arbitrary cutting off by the mandate of a single man. But the Speaker got through his task with dignity, being strengthened by the burst of enthusiastic cheers which greeted him.”

The Irish Members endeavoured to protest by speech against this proceeding, and failing in the attempt, they rose in their seats and left the Chamber in a body, shouting, “Privilege,” “Privilege.” So ended the first battle over this Coercion Bill, the nett result being that England found, in order to suspend the Constitution in Ireland, she was obliged to destroy the most cherished tradition and most

precious possession of her Parliament—the freedom of speech of its members.

The following day my membership of the House of Commons actually commenced, and I had an experience, I believe, absolutely unique in Parliamentary history. I took my oath and seat, made my maiden speech, and was suspended and expelled from the House for the rest of the sitting all in the same evening. It was none of my choosing, however, I had this distinction thrust upon me. It occurred in this way. The excitement of the previous day had been intensified by the news of the arrest of Mr Davitt in Ireland. Mr Dillon had endeavoured to extract some explanation from the Government, and had been named and suspended, and then Mr Parnell, on the Prime Minister rising to speak, moved “That Mr Gladstone be not heard.” What then occurred was thus described by an English journalist at the time:

“The Speaker ruled that Mr Gladstone was in possession of the House, whereupon Mr Parnell, rising amid cheers from the Irish Members, moved that Mr Gladstone be not heard. The Speaker again calling on Mr Gladstone, Mr Parnell shouted out: ‘I insist upon my motion being put.’ The Speaker, having warned Mr Parnell that his conduct was wilfully obstructive, again called on Mr Gladstone, who had not proceeded beyond his first sentence when Mr Parnell, rising again excitedly, insisted upon his right to be heard. ‘I name Mr Parnell as disregarding the authority of the Chair,’ said the Speaker, and Mr Gladstone moved his suspension. The House was cleared for a division in the usual manner, but the Irish Members remained seated, Mr R. Power, the whip, walking round and round as a shepherd’s dog guards a flock of sheep. Mr Sullivan shouted out: ‘We contest the legality of the proceeding,’ and the Speaker, after the division, reported the matter to the House.”

For this refusal to vote thirty-seven Irish members were suspended, myself among the number. Having been suspended, we each in turn refused to leave the Chamber, and addressing the Speaker protested against the entire proceeding, and intimated that unless superior force was employed we should resist. That was my maiden speech. Superior force in the shape of the Sergeant-at-Arms and

his merry men was applied, and eventually each one of us was escorted under arrest from our seats. In this way my Parliamentary career opened with the unique experience of taking my seat, making my maiden speech, and being expelled by force from the Chamber on the same evening.

During the fifteen years which have passed away since then I have been thrown into political contact with some great and many remarkable Englishmen—Disraeli, Gladstone, Bright, Chamberlain, Churchill, Harcourt and Balfour. I have seen the triumph of their genius, the development of their character, the powerful spell they have thrown over the House of Commons and the people of Great Britain, but I can with perfect truth assert that not one of them presented so strange, so fascinating, so commanding a personality as Charles Stewart Parnell. This testimony, as coming from a political disciple and a personal friend, may perhaps be regarded by some of you as biassed, but the view of Parnell which I wish to place before you is not that of his friends who knew him and loved him well, but rather that which is accepted to-day universally by the English people, who at one time hated him, who at another time respected and honoured him, and who at all times feared him. Writing of him after his death a well-known English writer said (and I quote these Englishmen lest it should be thought that my pictures are exaggerated):

“In years to come the name of Charles Stewart Parnell will be familiar in school books, and his tall figure and pale face will stand out distinct in the portrait gallery of statesmen of the Victorian age. Parnell was not interesting in the same sense as Disraeli was and Gladstone is, but there was about him that fascination which pertains to strong characters whom the public feel they do not thoroughly understand. Disraeli at one epoch of his career was known as the mystery man of politics. That was in his case a mocking phrase used in a sense that implied full insight into the strings and motives of his double shuffling. With Parnell it was different. About him there brooded a real air of mystery that in a subtle way added to his power.”

The truth is, the English never understood Parnell. They never could fathom his aims and his policy. Though

a man of strong passion, his outward demeanour was invariably cold and impassive. He seldom spoke once he had risen to a commanding position in Parliament. When he did speak, the silence which crept over the House was absolutely painful in its intensity. He had something of that quality which Coleridge attributed to the Ancient Mariner. "He held them with his glittering eye, they could not choose but hear." He was no orator in the ordinary acceptation of the word. Indeed he commenced his Parliamentary career as a halting speaker, with almost an impediment in his speech. As time went on it is true he spoke with ease and fluency, but the great quality of his speaking was its clearness, directness and terseness. "No man," said Mr Gladstone of him, "is more successful in doing that which it is commonly supposed all speakers do, but which in my opinion few really do—namely, in saying what he means."

At one time Parnell was the most hated man in the House of Commons. At another he was probably the most powerful and respected. Let me shortly sketch for you one or two pictures which will show you Parnell in both characters. You have already seen him as an obstructionist, detested, absolutely loathed, by Englishmen, fighting almost single-handed against all parties in the House of Commons, certainly the most unpopular man in Britain.

A few years later his position had somewhat changed. He was now more feared than hated, and when in the spring of 1882 he was released from prison, and the policy of Coercion was abandoned by Mr Gladstone, it seemed as if a reaction was about to set in in England with regard to Ireland, and to Mr Parnell personally. Suddenly the Phoenix Park murder took place, and the fury and hatred of England burst out afresh with a hundred-fold greater intensity than before. A blind unreasoning fury took possession of the public, and there was but one thought in every English mind: Parnell was the man responsible, Parnell was the man who ought to suffer. Imagine yourselves in the House of Commons at its first meeting forty-

eight hours after the murder. All London surged down towards Westminster. The police with difficulty cleared a passage for Members to enter the building through the crowds in the street outside. Such one or two of the Irish Members as were recognised were greeted with howls of execration. Inside the House there was the stillness of the tomb. By a strange and mysterious instinct every member had come down dressed in black as to a funeral. Every available inch of room on the floor and in the galleries was occupied, and when Mr Gladstone, looking strangely old and haggard, rose to move the adjournment of the House in consequence of the crime, a sort of shiver seemed to run through the entire assembly. Mr Gladstone himself broke down. He had loved Lord Frederick Cavendish, and he could barely articulate his words in expressing his horror at the deed. When he resumed his seat Mr Parnell rose, pale and worn after his six months' imprisonment, but calm, erect and defiant. A strange, fierce murmur ran round the House, the like of which I had never heard. It could not be described as a growl, though it had in it a note of savage hatred. We looked up startled, and knew not what was about to happen, but it suddenly died away into a silence so intense we could almost feel it. What had this man to say? This man, the indirect if not the actual cause of the murder? What right had he to speak—What right had he to be here at all? His very presence was an outrage! Never, as long as I live, shall I forget the looks of fierce detestation turned upon Mr Parnell at that moment. We, his friends, tried to counteract all this by a cheer, but so chilled were we by the scene that it died away unuttered on our lips. Mr Parnell, however, did not falter. In a few simple words, expressed without any outward sign of the influence of the scene upon him, he expressed his horror at the crime and sat down the most hated, distrusted and feared man in England.

Let me sketch for you another scene in the same place four years later. Once more the House is crowded. Once more all London has flocked to Westminster. Once more

an eager crowd of thousands of people wait patiently in the street to see the Members arrive. Their demeanour now is strangely different from what it was on that dreadful day four years before, and as Mr Parnell quietly makes his way towards the entrance he is recognised and greeted with a cheer. What is the meaning of it all? The answer is simple. To-day Mr Gladstone is to introduce his first Home Rule Bill, and, next to the aged Premier himself, the Irish Leader holds the largest place at this moment in the public mind of England. When Mr Parnell rose to address the House of Commons that evening, few could believe that he was the same man, and that the same assembly of the scene after the Phoenix Park tragedy. Mr Gladstone's oration had been the most powerful heard by that generation of Members, and the echoes of its eloquence would for ever ring in their ears; but after all what they wanted to hear, what all England, nay, all the world, wanted to hear, was what judgment the Irish Leader would pronounce on the Home Rule Bill. Would he accept it or would he reject it? Would he save or kill the Ministry? It is a significant fact, significant of the man and of his character, that no one outside his own party knew what his decision was to be until he rose to speak in the debate. Mr Gladstone himself, when introducing the measure, did not know what reception it would meet from the inscrutable and indomitable captain who led the Irish forces. This, indeed, was Parnell's day of triumph. He had driven the Liberals from office in 1885 by Irish votes because they refused Home Rule. He had driven the Conservatives from office in 1886 for the same reason, and now he had England's greatest statesman and the Liberal party majority at his feet confessing that they were wrong in the past, and adopting Home Rule for Ireland as their watch-word. He, the hated and despised of four years before, was now the master of Parliament, and the arbiter of the fate of Ministries.

One more scene and I will pass away from Parnell. It was the 1st of March 1889. The conspiracy of the London *Times* and Pigott to ruin Parnell by means of forged letters

implicating him in the Phoenix Park murder had just broken down. Pigott himself had that day fled the country. Parnell, on leaving the Court, had been escorted through the streets by cheering thousands of Englishmen. As he emerged from that Court he passed by the spot where Temple Bar had once stood, Temple Bar, upon whose summit in the olden days were displayed the bloody heads of the Geraldines and other Irish chiefs. Never in the history of the country had there been so dramatic an episode. For many long months this terrible accusation, made with all the authority of the greatest newspaper in England, had hung over Mr Parnell's head. The most skilled experts in handwriting had sworn positively that his was the hand which had penned the damning letters. Belief in his guilt was almost universal in England, and now suddenly the forger had the truth wrung from his lips in the witness chair, and had fled the country to find a few hours afterwards an end to his miserable life by suicide. The reaction in Mr Parnell's favour was instantaneous and complete. In the House of Commons an Irish debate was proceeding. The unusual crush of Members, and the public excitement outside the building, bore testimony to the universal desire to see Mr Parnell, to witness how he would demean himself in his hour of triumph, to hear what he had to say, to pay homage to him as a victor. It was late when Mr Parnell reached the House. His approach was heralded by cheers in the street, in the lobby, and on his entrance into the Chamber. A few moments afterwards he rose to speak, and then was enacted a scene absolutely without parallel in the history of the House of Commons. Once again, let me quote from an Englishman. The following description of it, written at the time, is from the pen of an Englishman, who was by no means too friendly to Mr Parnell or to Ireland:

“When he stood up with pale set face turned towards the Chair, the Irish Members near him began to cheer. Then they rose to their feet. The enthusiasm extended, and sedate English Liberal Members also uprose—a thing never before seen in the House of Commons in honour of an Irish Member.

But there was more to follow. Mr Gladstone stood up and turned to face with welcoming countenance the representative of Ireland. In a second, ex-Ministers right and left followed his lead, and resounding cheers filled the House, whilst Mr Parnell, pale to the lips, stood waiting till the cheering subsided. It was some minutes before he found an opportunity of speaking, the cheers rising again and again, with waving of hats and clapping of hands. All this while Mr Gladstone and his colleagues stood with their faces turned towards the animated group of Irishmen."

During this extraordinary ovation Mr Parnell remained perfectly calm and impassive. Not even by an inclination of his head did he acknowledge the applause which greeted him from those Englishmen who but yesterday were clamouring for his blood, and when at length silence was restored and he commenced to speak, his usual cold and unimpassioned voice and manner did not show the smallest trace of excitement or emotion. He made no allusion whatever to the marvellous scene which had just been enacted, or to the break-down of the conspiracy, but proceeded quietly, as if nothing had happened, to the discussion of the particular question before the House.

Here was, if you will, a strong, still man, a man to be feared by his foes, a man to be trusted and followed to the death by his friends. A man of grim and stern resolve, of unbending nature, unmoved by applause and triumph, as he had been undaunted by hatred and defeat. Never this century did Ireland stand higher than at that moment, and never in the whole history of the British Parliament did there appear a prouder figure, a stronger or more commanding personality.

In many respects Mr Gladstone was the very antithesis of Parnell. Above and beyond all else Mr Gladstone is an orator, incomparably the greatest orator the House of Commons has seen this century. I have heard many great speakers in the Pulpit, at the Bar, and in Parliament, but I never heard one fit, in my opinion, to rank in the same class as Gladstone. John Bright I well remember. His fine presence, his incisive and clear-cut diction, his resonant voice, his dramatic action—all made it easy to

understand how he had earned the title of "Tribune of the People." But in all these attributes Mr Gladstone was his superior, while he had many great intellectual qualities never possessed by Bright at all. I suppose no man ever possessed a more marvellous voice than Gladstone. It was powerful, but that was not the secret of its influence. It was its sweetness and its extraordinary compass. Gladstone could sway an assembly as I believe no other living man could do. I have heard him speaking on a multitude of subjects. Sometimes my sympathies were with him, oftener probably against him. I have heard him nobly vindicating the national cause of Ireland, and I have heard him at other times denounce and overwhelm with ridicule all those things dearest to my heart; but I can with truth say I never heard him on any subject without being lost in admiration at his genius, or without experiencing the keenest sense of intellectual enjoyment. With the single exception of John Bright, he was the only orator in Parliament during my fifteen years there. Disraeli, it is true, was always delightful to listen to, keen, satirical, witty, appealing irresistibly to a sense of humour and to common sense, but never to the feelings or passions. Gladstone, on the other hand, played upon the passions of an audience at his will. He swayed them to laughter or tears with equal ease. He in truth was the last of the great orators of Parliament. Of good speakers, keen debaters, we have plenty to-day. Mr Chamberlain, Mr Balfour, Sir William Harcourt, Mr Asquith, and others, but of orators the British Parliament cannot to-day boast of a single one.

As is the case with all great men, Mr Gladstone's character is a many-sided one, and his career as a public man has been full of strange inconsistencies and vicissitudes. A recent writer says of him:

"It is sufficiently evident that Mr Gladstone is one of those great and complex personalities who excite both violent antagonisms and violent enthusiasms, who are the subject of as much misunderstanding as comprehension, and who are continually baffling the dissecting knives of their critics. His

career is strewn with what seem to be startling inconsistencies, his character abounds in apparent contradictions. The rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories, he became the most daring Liberal innovator of the century. The author of *The Church in its Relations with the State*, he became the most dangerous foe of Establishment. We have seen him expressing positive loathing for Lord Palmerston, and we have seen him within a Session Lord Palmerston's Chancellor of the Exchequer; he came into power in 1880 on a wave of Liberal enthusiasm, the result of his agitation against the Jingoism of Lord Beaconsfield, and presently his own Government was outrivalling that Jingoism in Egypt and the Soudan; he who voted steadily for Coercion for Ireland all his life, and always scouted the demands of Home Rulers, introduced the Home Rule Bill of 1886, and surpassed the most extreme Nationalist Member in the vehemence with which he denounced the 'blackguardism and baseness' by which the Union was effected."

In the course of such a career it was inevitable that he should arouse bitter antagonism. If Mr Gladstone was at one time the most powerful and respected man in England, if in some respects he is so still to-day in his retirement, it is also true to say that at other times he was probably the most hated. Even in my short experience I have seen his popularity ebb and flow, I have seen the demeanour of the House of Commons change toward him with the most astounding rapidity.

When the vainglorious Jingo war spirit, fostered by Disraeli, was at its height, Mr Gladstone was never one single day safe from insult either in the streets of London or in the House of Commons. A mob broke the windows of his house. He declared himself that he was only able to walk safely to his house with his wife owing to "the protection of the police." His every appearance in public was the signal for hooting and hissing. In the House of Commons the almost daily insults to which he was subjected culminated in a scene which will show you at a glance to what depths of vulgar rowdyism Members of the English Parliament sometimes descend. The following is from the pen of an Englishman:

"Scene: Division Lobby of the House of Commons. Time: 9.20 p.m. Gladstone is walking along the Lobby, having recorded

his vote. The Conservative majority in the other Lobby observe him through the glass door, and suddenly set up a yell of execration which could scarcely be more violent if the murderer of Lord Leitrim, flying for sanctuary to Westminster, were discovered skulking in the Lobby. The crowd increased until it reaches the proportions of forty or fifty English gentlemen, all well educated, many of good birth, who, with hand held to mouth to make the sound shriller, howl and groan, while some even shake their fists. Gladstone, startled at the cry, looks up and sees the crowd. He pauses a moment, and then advancing close to the glass door, calmly surveys the yelling mob. On one side, the slight figure drawn up to its full height, and the pale stern face steadfastly turned towards the crowd, on the other the jeering, mocking, gesticulating mob. Between them the glass door."

At this time, assuredly, there was no more unpopular man in England. The popular songs of the day were replete with gross vituperation of him. One of these songs was intensely amusing, mingling, as it does, a grotesque humour with its savagery. Let me quote a stanza:

"When the G.O.M. goes down to his doom,
He will ride in a fiery chariot ;
And sit in state on a red-hot plate
Between Satan and Judas Iscariot.
Says the Devil, 'We're rather full, you see,
But I'll do the best I can ;
I'll let Ananias and Judas free
And take in the Grand Old Man !'"

There are two scenes in the House of Commons connected with Gladstone which stand out clear and distinct beyond all others in my memory. One a scene of defeat and humiliation, the other of triumph such as few men have ever achieved within these walls. These two scenes well exemplify the vicissitudes of fortune which even the greatest men have to face in Parliament, and the abrupt and extraordinary changes of feeling and opinion which sway the House of Commons from time to time. The first scene was the defeat of Gladstone's Government in 1885, and the other was the introduction of the second Home Rule Bill in the year 1893. Both these scenes were the direct result of the Irish National Question.

Mr Gladstone's Government came into power in 1880 with an overwhelming majority.

In speaking to you about Parnell I have already explained the deadly feud which raged between the Irish Party and the Liberal Government of the day. Coercion was in full swing in Ireland. Almost every one of us had made the acquaintance of plank bed and prison skilly, and we had been waiting for five years for an opportunity of striking back an effective blow. At last the opportunity came. An unpopular Budget was introduced. Certain defections had weakened the ranks of the Government, and at the last moment it became clear that the Irish Members held the balance of power. They exercised it swiftly, relentlessly, and defeated the Coercionist Government. The scene on the announcement of the result of the division baffles description. The central figure, of course, was Mr Gladstone. There he sat, pale and haggard, making no effort to conceal the pain, humiliation and surprise of the moment. All around him there surged and swayed an excited throng, while the air resounded with the most conflicting cries. One universal feeling of triumph seemed to pervade the whole scene. The Liberals themselves were not apparently sorry. They had already deserted Mr Gladstone. It was above all a personal defeat. The old man was seventy-seven years of age, and this was the end of his career. Such was the thought uppermost in every man's mind, and with an almost savage cruelty this thought added zest to the cheers of triumph from his foes. High above all rang the voices of the Irish members shouting, "Down with Coercion." They stood upon the benches and shook their clenched hands at the old man, and again and again reminded him that it was Ireland's vote that had wrought his downfall. Amongst those most wildly excited was one, of whose brief, strange and sad career I shall have a word to say later—I mean Lord Randolph Churchill—then young, vigorous, and confident of the future. The scene of disorderly and tumultuous triumph lasted for a quarter of an hour or more, and when at last it exhausted itself, and members began to troop out into

the lobbies, the old man still sat pale and exhausted upon his seat, the very picture of hopeless old age and overwhelming defeat.

Who could have believed at that moment that eight years afterwards—at the age of eighty-four—this marvellous man would appear again in that House, more powerful, more honoured than ever, still strong in mind and body, moving, as Prime Minister, the first reading of the Home Rule Bill of 1893.

For seven years he had been in Opposition. During all that time he had laboured with an energy and a splendid confidence in the future which put to shame many of his younger colleagues. In Parliament he led the Opposition with unflagging vigour. In the country he spoke on scores of platforms. Never in his whole career did he give more time and labour to public life. His opponents gazed in wonder at this marvellous old man. They had counted on his disappearance after the defeat of his first Home Rule Bill in 1886. Lord Randolph Churchill described him as “an old man in a hurry,” and plainly and heartlessly indicated his view that the Unionists had only to wait patiently for a little while and the old man would disappear. What an irony of fate that it should have been the young man who passed away and that the old man should still be alive to-day, closely approaching now to his ninetieth year, in complete command of all his great intellectual faculties, and physically hale and robust. Those years of opposition, from 1886 to 1892, ended in the complete triumph of Gladstone, and when in February 1893 he rose once more as Prime Minister, to introduce the Home Rule Bill, everyone present realised that they were taking part in one of the most historical scenes ever enacted within the walls of the British Parliament.

As usual on such occasions, the populace assembled in thousands round the House of Parliament. For long hours an immense crowd waited outside Mr Gladstone's house, and when he emerged, accompanied by the faithful woman who had done so much to help him during his long career, he received a noble ovation, and was escorted in

triumph to the doors of Parliament. This was after three o'clock in the afternoon, but from early morning the inside of the building had been the scene of intense excitement. The most eager competition had taken place for seats in the various strangers' galleries, and even the staid and stately peers had shoved and pushed and fought like schoolboys to obtain admittance. The Prince of Wales and his son arrived early. All the centre of the floor of the House had been filled with chairs, and even then there was not room for all the members who overflowed into every passage, and some of whom sat upon the steps of the gangway. At a quarter to four there was but one vacant place—that of the Prime Minister. The intense excitement was evidenced by that subdued movement and eager whispered conversation which the papers in reports of great trials sometimes describes as sensation. Suddenly the echo of a cheer is heard from outside. It comes nearer and louder. All eyes are fixed upon the door, and then, after a moment's pause, the old man enters. The entire assembly, with the exception of a few Irish Members, friend and foe alike, rose to greet him. Never did he look nobler, stronger, or more vigorous. Eighty-four years old! It seemed impossible to believe. His step had the elasticity and spring of youth; his carriage was as erect as that of a man of twenty; his eye had all the fire of earlier days; and the flush on his cheek, caused by the scene of excitement he had just passed through outside, made him look almost young. I have always thought Gladstone a strikingly handsome man. To-day the leonine quality of his head showed clearer than ever, and as he walked to his seat I could not help thinking that one such scene of triumph as this, one such scene of complete mastery on one side, and honour and homage upon the other, was worth a lifetime of toil and suffering.

Gladstone failed to carry his Home Rule proposals, and he is now spending the last days of his life in quiet and retirement, but his recent action on the Armenian question, and the popular enthusiasm it evoked, show how great a hold he still has upon the imaginations and the hearts

of the great masses of the English people. As a public man, posterity will no doubt point to his faults—what man is faultless? But I venture to say he will stand out as one of the greatest orators and statesmen of the English Parliament, and one of the most remarkable men who ever appeared in the whole course of English history. And this testimony is perhaps all the more valuable from the fact that it comes from one who has never been a follower of his, and who has been for the most part a bitter opponent.

Gladstone's career in Parliament, and in public offices, was one of the longest upon record. That of Lord Randolph Churchill was one of the shortest. He was indeed the comet of a season, but during his short career he exhibited qualities which fascinated the public mind, and made him one of the most interesting personalities of the public life of this generation in England. I knew him well. I respected his abilities, I admired his many brilliant qualities, I recognised his kindly nature, and I deeply deplored his sad and untimely end. It was during the early days of Irish obstruction that Lord Randolph first interfered in Parliamentary debate. He became the leader of the Fourth Party, as it was called—a little coterie of four Members, who broke loose from the ordinary discipline of the Tory party, and aping a kind of Tory democracy, attacked with bitter impartiality the Government of Mr Gladstone, and the old leaders of the Conservative Opposition. This knot of members consisted of Lord Randolph, Mr Arthur Balfour, the present Leader of the House of Commons, Mr Gorst, a prominent member of the present Government, and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who stands high to-day in the diplomatic service of England as Ambassador to the Court of Spain. In those early days the Irish Members and the Fourth Party, having much the same end in view, were in daily, almost hourly, communication. They sat on the next bench below us, and many was the private consultation we had with them, when planning attacks upon the Government. When, by our combined votes, we overthrew Mr Gladstone in 1885, and the

Conservatives came for a few months into office, we obtained from them, through Lord Randolph Churchill, a promise of abandoning Coercion, and the Crimes Act of 1882 was allowed by them to lapse. More than that, Lord Randolph at once publicly declared that the policy of his party was to extend to Ireland every measure of self-government given to England, and the new Tory Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carnarvon, immediately upon taking office opened his famous negotiations with Mr Parnell on the question of Home Rule. Lord Randolph's opportunity had now come.

From that day forward until he, in a moment of temper, threw it away, he possessed the foremost place in the House of Commons on the Conservative side. When, after the elections of 1886, the Tory party came back to power, he accordingly was made Leader of the House, a position which had not been filled by so young a man since the days of Pitt. All the old leaders of his party were set aside in his favour, and it seemed as if he were entering upon a career of infinite possibilities.

Lord Randolph had many great qualities, but he had an ungovernable temper and an overweening opinion of his own power. In a moment of temper, caused by a temporary difference with his party, and thinking it was impossible for them to do without him, he resigned office. His resignation was accepted, and from that day his career may be said to have closed. He absented himself from Parliament for a considerable time, and when he returned it was evident some fell disease had laid its paralysing grasp upon him. He was still quite a young man, but he came back strangely aged and bent and broken. I have never witnessed a more pathetic scene. All his old friends assembled to welcome him. It had been arranged he was to commence the debate for the evening, and the knowledge that he was to make his re-entree on the stage upon which he had played so brilliant a part brought together a remarkable assemblage. The Prince of Wales sat in the Peers' Gallery, which was crowded to overflowing. There was but one feeling amongst men of all parties—a desire

to give a kindly welcome to the man who had been when in his prime a general favourite. In appearance he was strangely altered. It has recently been stated, and I believe it was true, that he had taken some drug to help him through the ordeal he had to face. Owing to a strange piece of ill-luck, an unexpected discussion which occupied an hour or more intervened between him and his speech. During this time he sat the very picture of nervousness and misery. The effect of the drug had time to wear away, and when he finally rose to address the House, members were shocked to see his physical weakness, and to mark the sad havoc made on him by his fell disease. His nervousness was painful. In vain he sought to rouse himself and collect his thoughts. He was inaudible, almost inarticulate. No one could follow his speech. In silence the tortured House, tortured by the spectacle of his evident suffering, sat patiently until at last he abruptly ceased and fell back in his seat. It was pitiful. He was so young. His prospects had but yesterday seemed so bright. He was so brilliant, so full of life and vigour, so masterful, and now he was so utterly crushed and broken. From that day he never recovered. Again and again he strove with pathetic persistence to regain his lost position. It was of no avail. He became worse and worse, and finally sank into his grave. All during my experience of Parliament I know of nothing more pitiful than this story of sudden dazzling success, followed by swift and utter disaster and destruction.

There is one other career, and one only, which I wish to sketch for you before I conclude—a career in some respects a sad one, but which, though it ended in premature death, yet ended in complete and absolute triumph—it was the career of the great demagogue, Charles Bradlaugh.

Bradlaugh's career as an Apostle of Socialism and Atheism is probably well known by you all. His Parliamentary career was indeed a strange one. For five long years he battled against the House of Commons for his right to a seat within its walls. The great working-class population of Northampton had returned him as their

member, as the colleague of the well-known Mr Labouchere. When he came to the table of the House to be sworn in he claimed the right to make an affirmation, declaring that the words of the oath, "So help me, God," were meaningless words to him. A Committee of the House considered his claim to be allowed to affirm, and decided against him. Immediately thereupon Bradlaugh appeared again at the table, and this time asked to have the oath administered to him. But he had previously declared his unbelief in the oath, and the House would not now permit him to take it. They declared his seat vacant, and ordered a new election. Northampton returned him again in triumph. Then commenced a struggle which lasted for five years, and ended in the defeat of the House and the victory of Bradlaugh. Repeatedly new elections were ordered. Upon each occasion the constituency returned their recalcitrant member. More than once Bradlaugh was arrested and imprisoned. Upon one occasion the House invoked the assistance of the police, who, after a fierce struggle, dragged him violently resisting out of the Lobby and down the staircase, and thrust him panting and ragged into the street. I well remember this occasion. Bradlaugh that afternoon had addressed an enormous public gathering of his supporters in Trafalgar Square, and had announced to them his intention of proceeding at once to Westminster and forcing his way into the House of Commons. He was escorted by an enormous and excited multitude as far as the Houses of Parliament. Here the gates were shut and the crowd kept outside. Bradlaugh alone was admitted. He entered the building, but was stopped at the door of the House of Commons by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who informed him he had received instructions from the House not to admit him. Bradlaugh was a man of great height and massive frame, and the Sergeant-at-Arms in his court suit and fancy sword looked like the picture of Jack the Giant Killer gazing up at one of his mighty adversaries. Bradlaugh pushed his way roughly past, but quick as lightning six burly policemen seized him and commenced attempting to drag him across the Lobby. He fought, indeed, like a

giant, and though the odds were so greatly against him it took his six adversaries a long time to remove him. Meantime a crowd of Members gathered round and watched the scene, and I well remember—it was then for the first time my sympathies were enlisted on Bradlaugh's behalf—when I witnessed the disgraceful spectacle of a duly elected representative of the people being kicked, and dragged, and beaten, and torn with brutal force from endeavouring to fulfil his duty to his constituents. In the end, of course, the will of the people triumphed, and in 1885 Bradlaugh was quietly allowed to take his seat. He died in January 1891. Before his death he had succeeded in completely reversing the opinion of the House in his regard, and had come to be looked up to with attention and respect as an able, industrious and thoroughly sincere man. The last and most pathetic incident in his strange career took place while he lay upon his death-bed, within a few hours of his death. The House of Commons, which had hated and persecuted him, now did a graceful and thoughtful act, though it was but a tardy reparation. It unanimously expunged from its records the resolution of some years before declaring him unfit to take a seat in that assembly. It sent him this message of repentance and sympathy just before he died, and it was the last fact of which he was conscious.

I need scarcely say I have not nearly exhausted the subject upon which I have been speaking, but yet I feel I can go no further to-night. Allow me to make one general remark in conclusion. In the main the English House of Commons is, I believe, dominated by a rough-and-ready sense of manliness and fair play. Of course I am not speaking of it as a governing body. In that character it has been towards Ireland always ignorant, and nearly always unfair. I am treating it simply as an assembly of men, and I say of it it is a body where sooner or later every man finds his proper level, where mediocrity will never permanently succeed, and where ability will never permanently fail.

IRELAND AND THE BOER WAR

House of Commons, 7th February 1900.

MR REDMOND moved the following Amendment to the Address

“But we humbly represent to your Majesty that the time has come when the war at present being waged in South Africa should be brought to a close, on the basis of recognising the independence of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.”

MR SPEAKER, I do not rise for the purpose of endeavouring to renew discussion about topics which have been the subject of the debate for the last week. I have no intention of perpetuating the wearisome and shameful story of the inefficiency and insincerity of the diplomacy which has led this country into a war for an ostensible object which could easily have been obtained by a little patience and goodwill, and a little conciliation. Still less do I desire to enter into any criticism of the political and military blunders which have brought disaster on your arms since the commencement of the war. My object is entirely different. I desire as far as possible to leave the past alone. I may say I have no particular sympathy with the recriminations which have passed between both the front benches as to the responsibility for this war. In my view both are responsible, though in different degrees, for its initiation, and both are equally responsible for its prosecution. My object is to explain and justify the feeling of Ireland upon this subject, and that will be evidenced by the votes of eighty Members of this House, who think and will act as one man. The sympathy of Ireland is with the two South African Republics. We abhor this war; we call for its stoppage, and we declare our intention to do all that in us lies to

maintain the independence of these two little Republics, which was won by untold sacrifices, and defended by a heroism which is without a parallel in the history of the world. I know, of course, that putting this view forward in this assembly must be unpalatable to many Members on both sides, but every sober-minded man must agree with me, that if a large body of Members hold this view it is well that the view should be expressed; and I trust the expression of opinion of eighty Members of this House, representing the majority of the people of Ireland, will be listened to, if not with respect, at anyrate with patience. The sympathy of Ireland is with the Boers. Why is this? On what foundation is it based? What is the explanation of it? I propose to answer shortly those questions. We in Ireland have been accused of being indiscriminate in our sympathies and our views of this war; we are told we know nothing of the merits of the quarrel, and that our sympathies with the Boers have one real and only motive, which is antagonism to England; that we should be against England, right or wrong; and I have even heard it said that if it was Germany who was fighting, and England was defending the Boers, we should turn right round. And it was alleged that if England had gone to war, as she undoubtedly ought to have done, three years ago to avenge the massacre of the Armenian Christians, our sympathies would have been on the side of the Great Assassin. I want to be perfectly frank and candid. There is both truth and untruth in that charge. It is true that wherever the Empire is involved in a difficulty of complication which diminishes its great strength, a feeling of hope and satisfaction stirs through the veins of men of the Irish race both at home and abroad. This is a fact which stares you in the face, and it is folly to conceal it. It is one of those facts which statesmen should study and observe and try to understand. It is not our fault that it is a fact, but yours. It is the fault of the history which you and your predecessors have made. You thought you had got rid of the Irish question when in 1895 you overwhelmed Home Rule by a majority of 150.

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You thought you had got rid of it in 1800 when you abolished the Irish Parliament, because, twenty years before, when you were engaged in your wicked American war, a war which particularly compares with the present war, you were confronted with this same phenomenon of the Irish seeking to take advantage of your difficulties and sympathising with your foe. Why was Ireland prone to these views then as it is now? It does not lie in the cussedness of the Irish, it is due to the simple fact that Ireland one hundred years ago felt she was treated with systematic injustice and deprived of her true rights. She had the same feeling before, and the same cause will at all times produce the same result in the history of nations. Some day, not perhaps far off, in that Ireland which you are about to create for yourselves in South Africa, you may find white people rejoicing in the Empire's difficulties and sending messages of sympathy to your foes. I would urge this country, before it is involved more deeply in this ill-fated war, to endeavour to learn something from the history of your own experience in Ireland and the American colonies, and from contrasting the history of other great portions of the Empire, and to beware of pursuing to the bitter end the chapter which, whatever way the military operations may go, whether you succeed in this war or not, can only be a story of misfortune and disgrace. I admit, in the frankest manner, that the feeling of the mass of the Irish people is hostile to the Empire. At this moment it would be hypocrisy for me to attempt to deny it, and it would be the utmost folly for you to attempt to minimise it. One of the greatest Englishmen of our time, John Henry Newman, in speaking of Irish discontent, drew a picture which explains to some extent this feeling that I have spoken of and admitted. He describes the feelings of an Englishman travelling in Ireland. He says:

“He finds that the wrongs which England has inflicted are faithfully remembered, her name and fellowship are abominated, the news of her prosperity heard with disgust, the anticipation of her possible reverses nursed and cherished as the best of consolations. The success of France or Russia over her armies, of

Yankee or Hindoo, is fervently desired as the first instalment of a debt accumulated through seven centuries, and that even though those armies are in so large a proportion recruited from the Irish soil. If he ventures to ask for prayers for England he receives one answer, a prayer that she may receive her due. It is as if the air rang with the old Jewish words, 'Oh, daughter of Babylon, blessed shall he be who shall repay thee as thou hast paid to us.'

I admit, therefore, the sympathy of Ireland with the Boers in this matter is, to a certain extent, due to the feeling which I have described. But having said so much I entirely deny that the attitude of the Irish people towards this war is governed wholly or even mainly by that sentiment. Irishmen are just as capable as anyone else of judging the policy and the merits of the conflicts in which this Empire chooses to embroil itself, more especially when, as in the present instance, an impoverished and over-taxed country is called upon to pay so heavy a proportion of the cost, and when so many thousands of Irish families, rich and poor alike, are called upon to pour forth the still more precious treasure of their children's blood. Do not imagine that this war does not come home to us in Ireland. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that there is scarcely a family in Ireland, from the poor people who live in Dublin slums to the highest in the land, that is not represented, in one shape or other, upon one side or other at the front. This is more the case with regard to Ireland than it is here, because in proportion to the population a larger number of our people take to soldiering for the mere love of the calling than with you, and when they do get to the front a far larger proportion of them are thrust into dangerous posts. I candidly admit that in one sense I cannot but rejoice that so many Irishmen are fighting in this cause. I recognise the duties and obligations of the soldier's calling—"His not to reason why; his but to do or die"—and recognising that, I, as an Irishman, cannot help feeling a thrill of pride at the record of the heroism of the Irish lads from Mayo and Roscommon, who have suffered so terribly in this war. I could not help noticing

that, while those brave and devoted press correspondents who have sent accounts of the operations to this country have paid generous tributes to the gallantry of these Irish regiments, in the official reports from General Buller and other officers in command no such mention has been made. I saw a calculation made the other day in a newspaper as to the number of men killed and wounded of various nationalities, and it was shown that since the war commenced there were 120 Irishmen killed or wounded to 56 Englishmen, and when it is remembered that these Irishmen are, as I have said, boys from Roscommon and Galway and other Irish counties, Catholics in creed, Nationalists every man of them practically in their sentiments, I can understand the impatience, almost the disgust, with which the taunt of the hon. and gallant Member the other night was heard by this House.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I never made any such taunt.

MR JOHN REDMOND: I will not enter into any conflict with the hon. gentleman. What he said is in the recollection of the House. It is not only that Irishmen are entitled to judge of this war, and the merits and policy of this enterprise, but as a rule their judgment is more likely to be sound than yours. For one thing, Irishmen are not subject to those passions of Imperial greed and pride and arrogance which habitually obscure the judgment of large classes of Englishmen on these occasions. They are not as materialistic in their aims, and they have, moreover—and it has often been accounted one of their weaknesses that they have—what is called a sympathetic temperament. They have a faculty for understanding other races, and so long as it is true that no Imperial policy can be wise or sound which is not morally right, so long I maintain that these instincts are more likely to lead the nation to a sound conclusion than, say, the instincts of the average modern Jingo in this country. By this means the Irish people, by a perfectly natural and, as I think, unerring process, have come to entertain a genuine abhorrence of this war, and a genuine

admiration for the little heroic Republics that are facing and thwarting your effort to destroy their independence. I assert emphatically that the sympathies of the Irish people would be in precisely the same direction if England were not concerned in the matter at all. Our sympathies would be on the side of the independence of these Republics, no matter what was the Power that was attempting to act as the bully and the oppressor in South Africa. If you look back over your own history you will see that in every war of this kind in which the Empire has been engaged the sympathies of Irishmen have always gone in the right direction, and not their sympathies only but their counsel and advice, and their counsel and advice have invariably been disregarded and rejected. Go back for a moment to the conflict which lost you America, and the memory of which is the real reason why to-day you cannot win the friendship and alliance of the United States. Go back to the history of that war. Who led the Opposition; who inspired, who planned, who worked through steadfast years in opposition to that luckless war? An Irishman, and in doing so he poured forth a wealth of political wisdom which has been the nourishment of your wiser statesmen ever since, and which if it could be only understood, and acted upon by your statesmen of to-day, would induce you even now to retrace your steps, and by an early peace to retrieve to some extent what I believe is the worst mistake of your Imperialism. Yes, Burke and Sheridan and Grattan and the mighty Irishmen of that day took precisely the same stand in that eventful controversy that we their humbler countrymen take to-day upon the question of this war. They had to face the self-same abuse, the same unstinted criticism that we have to do. But who in the world of politics dares to say now that they were not absolutely in the right? No; the organised and obstinate pride of the rulers of that day would not accept advice from the treacherous Irish Members, and America was lost. In crises like this your best advisers have always been Irish statesmen and Irish soldiers. But you have always distrusted their advice,

whether in the case of the present war or in other struggles. Had you taken the advice and heeded the warning of one who was your representative in South Africa until recently—I mean General Butler (who was described as labouring under the disadvantage of being an Irishman and a Catholic), had you hearkened to his advice, instead of the advice of Sir Alfred Milner, you would not be the spectacle of humiliation before the civilised world which you now are. I say, therefore, that we arrive by quite a natural process at our sympathies with these Republics. How could it be otherwise? We would be stocks or stones if our admiration were not aroused by one of the finest spectacles that the world has witnessed since Thermopylæ—the resistance of these two little Republics to the most powerful Empire of modern times. I think I am speaking the sentiments of all generous-minded men in this House—no matter what view they take of the war—when I say that we admire the pluck and heroism of the old grey-bearded Boer side by side with the dauntless courage of the Boer of sixteen in the stand they have already made against this mighty Empire in defence of what they believe to be right. Do they surrender their independence without a struggle? Do the Free Staters, thinking only of their crops, abandon their brothers in the Transvaal? Had they done so we should all, without distinction of creed or party, have heartily despised them; and it seems to me that but for this bloody struggle the world would have been robbed of one of its most stirring episodes. I think the world at large owes a deep debt to these two little Republics for showing, in this degraded age, that there are other things to fight for than gold, and for which they are prepared to lay down their lives. Sir, the cant we have heard that this war was set on foot to remove the grievances of the Uitlanders, to obtain for them the five years' franchise, no longer deceives anyone. If that had been the object of this country it could have easily been obtained without war, as the question was on the eve of settlement on the 19th August, when the five years' franchise was offered. And it is clear from the course

of the diplomacy and the discussions in this House that the responsibility for the breaking off of negotiations rests with this country. However, that is not worth while arguing now, because after the speech of the Colonial Secretary the other day no man will deny that this war between Boer and Briton is to establish the supremacy of the British in the two Republics, and if that be so I for one pray God that the effort will be frustrated. Sir, these may sound strong words, but do you remember the words uttered by one of the greatest of your Parliamentary figures, one of the greatest of your orators, and one of the greatest of Imperialists? I refer to Lord Chatham when, speaking of the American war, he said:

“The Americans struggling for their rights I love and admire. It is the struggle of free and virtuous patriots. The time demands the language of truth. In a just and necessary war, to maintain the rights and honour of my country, I would strip the shirt from my back to support it. But in such a war as this, unjust in its principle, impracticable in its means, and ruinous in its consequences, I would not contribute a single effort or a single shilling. I am glad the Americans have resisted. Resistance was as necessary as it was just.”

Let me then add as to this attitude of Ireland that it is not governed either slightly or mainly by hostility to England, but is based on the merits of the struggle. It is not Ireland alone which takes this view. It is England that stands to-day in isolation, in splendid, may be, but disgraceful isolation; for all the nations on the earth, as far as one can make out, share our antipathy to the war. The solitary exception whose sympathy you win is Turkey. [Interruption.] Does anyone doubt that? [“Yes.”] I am judging by your own newspapers. The other day in the *Standard* newspaper there were published extracts from articles from all the leading papers from all the capitals of the world—from Vienna, Berlin, Brussels, St Petersburg, Madrid, Paris—and, not least, from America. Every one of these expressions was hostile to you and was exactly the same as the expressions which we make to-day on behalf of Ireland. Let me take the

case of America. I myself have recently been in the United States, and I there had the pleasure of meeting, not merely prominent Irish-Americans, but many leading statesmen of purely American extraction, and while I admit that public official expressions of hostility to you are not heard, chiefly because America, being embroiled in the Philippine war, does not feel herself in a position to rebuke you, as she otherwise would—still the overwhelming opinion of the leading statesmen of America and of the mass of the people is hostile to you. In the issue of the *Standard* to which I have referred there were extracts from the *New York Herald*, which, like *The Times* in this country, generally throws in its lot with the strongest side, but which may be taken very fairly to express the dominant view for the moment. The *New York Herald*, in the article to which I am alluding, declared that the overwhelming mass of opinion was against England in this war, and the *New York Sun*, which was the most pro-British organ in America, addresses a remonstrance and expresses its fear lest the experience of Lord North in America should be repeated in South Africa, and asks whether the animosity of the Africanders would be lessened by years of war, even though they result in victory through the slaughter of all their kinsmen, whose children would simply inherit an implacable blood feud. That is the view expressed in what has been of recent years the most pro-British paper in the United States. They think it is an unjust war, and they desire to induce you to bring it to a speedy termination in accordance with the views that I am expressing here. I do not want to use a rather hackneyed illustration, but it is worth repeating. The universal opinion of the civilised world being against France in the Dreyfus business was quoted by all the organs of public opinion in this country as conclusive proof in itself that France was wrong. I ask now does this universal opinion of Christendom against you to-day count for anything, and is this war to be allowed to go on until the Union Jack waves over Pretoria or until tens of thousands of brave men have been slaughtered, and per-

haps hundreds of millions of treasure have been expended, and all in an enterprise which cannot bring you credit or glory, but which must undoubtedly end in the establishment of a state of eternal enmity between the white races in South Africa? Let me ask, if this war is persisted in to the bitter end, what will be the result? I do not mean will you get to Pretoria. I take that for granted. As we were reminded some time ago, eleven armed men are more than a match for one man in his shirt. I conclude that if you continue to pour in troops the end is inevitable. But that is not the result I am speaking of. What will the future of South Africa be? The Boers have added a new page to the annals of political and military heroism. Do you think you can blot out that page, that you can trample upon it and that it will be forgotten? Do you think with such a page behind them you can wipe out Boer nationality? I say the only chance of retrieving the mistake is this. You may devastate these two Republics; you may exterminate the entire male population. If so, what then? Well, I say let a woman answer. This woman is the sister of the Prime Minister of Cape Colony. I think I heard someone smile at that. Why is he Prime Minister of Cape Colony? Why, because he has at his back the support of the majority of the white races in South Africa. This lady says:

“You may see all of the fighting men in arms slain. But what of the women? If there were left but 5000 pregnant South African-born women and all the rest of their people destroyed, those women would breed up again a race like the first. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the men who lie under the stones, who are not English or Dutch, but only African, will say as they pass those heaps, ‘There lie our grandfathers or great-grandfathers who died in the great war of independence.’”

With these facts staring you in the face, how can any man look with confidence to the future of South Africa? It may be asked what can be done now. I said at the commencement of my remarks that I would not go back as far, at any rate, as the past is concerned. The situation now is that you are at war. Even if you wrongly went to

war, hon. Members say you must go on. [An HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!] Ah! "hear, hear!" says a feeble voice. I do not think that even the Colonial Secretary would cheer that sentiment. This war in my view, and in the view of those for whom I speak, was an unjust war in its inception. We say that the only course for you is to recognise that at once, and, before further slaughter takes place in South Africa, and before the future of South Africa is further imperilled, to retrace your steps and allow these Republics to maintain their independence. We call, therefore, for the stoppage of this war. We ask that the independence of these gallant Republics shall be guaranteed and maintained. In the words of the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth, we ask for some settlement honourable to that brave people whose conduct in this war has vindicated for them the right to maintain their independence. Yes, Sir; those are brave and courageous words, and it is a singular coincidence that they are almost identical with words used in this House with regard to the Boer War in 1881 by the late Mr Parnell. In 1881 Mr Parnell gave notice of the following motion:

"To call attention to the Transvaal War, and to move that in the opinion of this House the Boers by their gallant resistance have earned the right to their independence."

To-day, after eighteen years, we make the same declaration, the only change in the situation being that the gallantry of the Boers in those days has been completely eclipsed by the gallantry of the Boers of to-day. In conclusion I cannot do better than say that we desire to put this case before the House with moderation, but with clearness. We do not desire to be guilty of the hypocrisy of pretending that we are solely moved by the merits. While admitting frankly that in these cases we are prejudiced to a certain extent by an antecedent hostility, at the same time in most cases in the past we have been right, and in this case we have been undoubtedly influenced by the merits of the controversy. We ask you in time to reconsider your

position. We believe that you can do it without injury to yourselves, certainly with far less injury than must come to you if you persist in going on to the end of the chapter and imperilling the future of the white races in South Africa. We at any rate make our position perfectly clear. We are not influenced one whit by the odium that may come upon us because of our action. We know that we are a small minority in this House—possibly some people say a contemptible minority. We look back on the past, and we know that when Chatham and Burke were right in denouncing the American War they were in contemptible minorities, and were the objects of odium and misrepresentation. We know that when in the Crimean War John Bright attempted to stem the flood of war passion he was in a contemptible minority, and was a mark for odium and taunts. And we care still less for the threats of injury to the cause of Home Rule. We know that we are right, and are profoundly convinced that Ireland our country has nothing to lose, but has everything to gain, by raising her voice on the side of justice and liberty. I therefore beg to move the Amendment standing in my name.

EXPULSION OF IRISH MEMBERS

House of Commons, 7th March 1901.

On the 5th March a debate was initiated on an Amendment proposed to a motion in Committee for a Vote on Account in respect of Civil Service. The vote was for £17,304,000. There were over one hundred departments concerned in this vote, more than twenty of which were purely Irish, and many of the others were common to the three countries. The amendment was for a reduction of £100 on the amount relating to the English Board of Education, and it was known that the whole day would be devoted to this question. It was a quiet and business-like discussion, and Mr Redmond had left the House early; in fact the number of Irish Members who remained through the whole of the sitting was small. At midnight the Education debate concluded and the amendment was put from the Chair and rejected on a division. Then Mr Balfour, to the surprise of at least the Irish Members, moved the closure on the whole vote which had been only one day before the House, and this evoked angry protests, during which a division was taken and the motion carried when the original question was put. Mr Boyle, Member for Donegal, rose to a point of order but would not be heard. Mr M'Hugh, Member for North Leitrim, persisted in objecting to a division, and was supported by Mr Flavin, who pointed out that not one Irish Member had been given an opportunity of discussing the Irish supply. The Chairman (the present Speaker) put the question, but the Irish Members declined to leave the House and to go into the Division lobbies, a formality which on such occasions is no longer necessary. Having failed to induce them to withdraw he sent for the Speaker (Mr Gully), who having sought without success to induce the Members to vote named twelve of them, whereupon Mr Balfour moved their suspension, but they refused to withdraw. A body of policemen were called in and they were forcibly carried out of the chamber. On the following day notice was given by Mr Balfour of a motion providing:—

“That if any Member or Members acting jointly, who have been suspended under this Order from the service of the House, shall refuse to obey the direction of the

Speaker, the Speaker shall call the attention of the House to the fact that recourse to force is necessary in order to compel obedience to his direction, and the Member or Members who have refused to obey his direction shall thereupon, and without further Question put, be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of the session."

This motion was moved on the 7th March 1901, and carried by a majority of 413 to 79.

I WISH to associate myself with both the right hon. gentlemen who have spoken in the expression of a desire to discuss this matter calmly, and not to import any heat into the discussion. It is my intention to follow that line. I do not know whether I shall succeed or not. [A laugh.] Yes, because the House must in fairness recognise that I come to the consideration of this question from an entirely different standpoint to that of either one or the other of the right hon. gentlemen. From the point of view of the calm consideration of this matter, I think the right hon. gentleman the Leader of the House would have been well advised if he had postponed for a few days bringing this matter before the House. However, I trust that none of what I may call that bad blood which arose the other night still exists, and that we may be able to discuss the subject with calmness.

This new rule is of course directed against the Irish Members; but I desire to say that in my opinion it is a matter which concerns the House of Commons, and the Parliament of England and its British Members far more than it concerns the Irish Members. I have risen to protest against this rule, and leaving aside just for a moment the peculiar Irish aspect of the question, I would venture to impress upon the House that in a free assembly, or what professes to be a free assembly, the enactment of penal provisions such as these is a hateful and degrading proceeding, which is not to be tolerated unless in the first place it is absolutely necessary, and, in the second place, I suggest he had the duty thrown upon him of seeing that the particular proposal that he made was the least oppressive and the least degrading he could devise to effect the object he

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had in view. Let me ask, is any change of this kind in the Standing Orders of this House necessary in order to prevent proceedings such as those which took place on Tuesday? The proposal of the right hon. gentleman is justified in his mind, and in the mind of the majority of this House, by the proceedings of Tuesday night; and it will be in your recollection, Sir, as no doubt it will be in the recollection of the right hon. gentleman, that yesterday afternoon, when I desired to discuss the whole circumstances connected with that event, I was unable to do so on a motion of privilege, but the Leader of this House said:

“Now the hon. gentleman desires that there should be an opportunity for discussing what has occurred; I suppose for considering also what means may be taken of preventing its recurrence.”

And then he went on to say that he would make a statement and a motion which would give me that opportunity.

MR A. J. BALFOUR: I think the hon. gentleman is unintentionally misinterpreting what I said, or it may be that I expressed myself badly. The point raised was whether there would be an opportunity of discussing the case of the hon. Member for South Fermanagh and the case of another gentleman which the hon. Member for East Mayo desired to raise yesterday. When Mr Speaker explained that it could not be raised yesterday I got up and said that although it could not be raised yesterday I understood from Mr Speaker's ruling that it could be raised on some subsequent occasion. I then added that there would be an opportunity given for discussing how such scenes could be prevented. That is all I intended to convey.

MR JOHN REDMOND: I do not wish to raise any conflict of recollection between the right hon. gentleman and myself, but he will forgive me perhaps if I read the words in *The Times* report. The right hon. gentleman is quite right in saying that I had raised the narrow point of these two Members; but my hon. friend the Member for East Mayo asked an additional question with reference to the discussion of the whole subject. Then the Leader of the House spoke as follows:

"I understood from the question of the hon. Member for Waterford that what he desired was an opportunity of discussing the case of these two gentlemen who regard themselves as being aggrieved. That opportunity will be granted as soon as they have put themselves in communication with Mr Speaker. Now the hon. gentleman desires that there should be an opportunity for discussing what has occurred, I suppose for considering what means may be taken for preventing its recurrence."

And he goes on:

"I think it possible—although I can make no statement at the present time—I shall be able to make a statement within a few hours for an opportunity to be given to the House to discuss both these questions."

I have only alluded to that matter to explain the line I intend to take in the few remarks with which I shall trouble the House. Admittedly this proposed rule springs out of the proceedings of last Tuesday; and I feel that if the proceedings of last Tuesday are to be used as an argument justifying the passage of this proposal, I am entitled to consider what those proceedings were.

In the first place, I say to the right hon. gentleman that, speaking generally, if the government of this House is in the future to be carried on by closure, by the suppression of adequate discussion, upon large Estimates, then not the most stringent rule which the wit of man can devise will save this House from a recurrence of scenes which no man in any part of the House desires to see interrupting the course of business here. For the proceedings of Tuesday last I say there is no precedent. The right hon. gentleman may tell me that there have been other occasions in recent years when the discussion on Votes on Account for large sums of money was confined to one night. I say that within recent years there is not one single precedent of a Vote on Account of this magnitude being passed after one night's discussion; and especially there is no precedent of such a vote, covering a multitude of subjects, including millions of money affecting Ireland and Scotland, being passed after only one topic of discussion had been raised.

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I saw in the *Daily News* to-day—[“ Oh, oh! ”]—I give it for what it is worth. Hon. gentlemen will perhaps allow me to remark that what I am going to quote from the *Daily News* is not an impersonal statement in a leading article, but a statement from the well-known House of Commons correspondent of that paper. In that he states that he was aware of his own personal knowledge that the Leaders of the Opposition were approached by the Government as to the Votes to be discussed on Tuesday, and were asked to select the first Votes; and the Opposition selected the Education Vote and the Board of Trade Vote; that the Education discussion went on and that the closure was moved, cutting out the discussion on the Board of Trade as well as other things, without any word of explanation being given here to the Leaders of the Opposition with whom this understanding had been arrived at.

MR A. J. BALFOUR: There was no such understanding.

A MEMBER OF THE FRONT OPPOSITION BENCH: Oh, yes, there was.

MR JOHN REDMOND: I am not making this statement of my own authority. If it is wrong, of course it can be corrected. But what I do want to say on my own authority is that, having taken particular pains myself to make inquiries in every unofficial quarter of the House, I ascertained, I satisfied myself at any rate, that it was the universal impression that no attempt would be made to closure the Vote on Account. Under these circumstances very many members left the building. I left, and a number of my colleagues also—a number of Members from all sides of the House, under this impression, left. And then suddenly, after twelve o'clock, after only the one subject had been discussed, the closure was moved, and there occurred what I will say, with a full sense of my responsibility, was a natural ebullition of feeling on the part of a number of Members in this quarter of the House. They have been told since that they ought not to have objected to this procedure because all the items mentioned in the Vote on Account could be discussed afterwards in Committee of Supply. But those who make that

statement forget that it was only the other day that an additional day for the discussion of Irish Estimates was refused by the right hon. gentleman, and that we are confined to three days out of the whole session for the discussion of the multitude of questions arising on Irish Supply. It has been stated that what I have called the ebullition of feeling on the part of a number of my colleagues—as I venture to assert with great malice in some of the newspapers of the country—was a premeditated and deliberate action on their part. I desire to give that the most unqualified and absolute denial. I am sure that even those who are most bitterly opposed to the line I take in the House will believe me when I say that it was absolutely unpremeditated, and that no one was more astonished than I was next morning when I opened my newspaper. I say it was a natural ebullition of feeling on the part of a number of Members of this House, and if it was an isolated instance of the closure I would not use that epithet. But this procedure on Tuesday night was part and parcel of a deliberate system of closure which has been put into operation this year. We are told that the discussions on Estimates must be scamped because certain financial arrangements must be completed by 31st March, the House having met on 14th February. Is that an argument? Next year, perhaps, the House will not meet until 1st March, and then the same argument will be used—"You must have less discussion this year because there is less time." No, sir, that is no answer, no argument.

The fact is, there is and there has been on the part of the Government and of the majority of the House for a number of years a deliberate attempt put on foot to stifle the voice of independent criticism of the Estimates, and to reduce to an absolute nullity what is the first and greatest constitutional right of this House—namely, discussion of grievance before the voting of money. I assert deliberately that the whole moral responsibility for what occurred on Tuesday last rests on the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House of Commons has a post of great responsibility—not merely responsibility to the Govern-

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ment, whose business he is trying successfully to manage, but the higher and wider responsibility for the freedom and efficiency and the dignity of the House of Commons. And I say from the double point of view, both of the interests of the Government and the wider interests of this deliberative assembly, he is morally responsible for what occurred. I have been in this House now for a considerable number of years, and my experience has been that Government has never in the long run gained by what I may call Parliamentary sharp practice, by an attempt to use constant closure, and by an attempt to deprive the voice of independent criticism of free utterance. Any such attempt that I have ever witnessed by either of the great English parties has recoiled upon itself, and this is a case in point. What has the Government gained by, without the slightest intimation or notice, closing this seventeen millions of money? It was done, we are told, in the interests of time. What is the result? You have dislocated entirely your programme of business, and you have had to give up to another thorny and most dangerous subject time which could be usefully and quietly employed in the further discussion which was necessary. And from the point of view of the House of Commons as a great deliberative assembly, which boasts that it is the mother of Parliaments, which boasts that it is a free assembly, what is the result? I regard the action of the right hon. gentleman from the point of view of the English Parliament as absolutely fatal. Does the saving of a few hours, even if you had succeeded in saving a few hours, to convenience the Government in the passage of Supply compensate you for having the credit and renown of this assembly dragged in the mire as it was on Tuesday night, and, as I venture to assert, dragged in the mire as it is being dragged to-night, when you are proposing this monstrous resolution? Year by year you have been lowering and degrading the status of this Parliament; step by step you have been depriving it of its historic rights, privileges and freedom. If I were to regard this solely as an Irish Nationalist, I might perhaps find in that fact some

consolation, because, after all, having robbed Ireland of her Parliament, and having compelled us to come across the water to your Parliament, it cannot but be some consolation to us to find that the price you have to pay is so high and bitter.

Is there no remedy possible for the state of things that has arisen except the enactment of these penal regulations? I will say respectfully to the House of Commons, the remedy is to be found, not in these penal regulations, which, however you may devise them, may be broken, and, if this system goes on, no doubt in the future will be broken—the remedy lies in the more considerate government of the affairs of the House, and the abstention from tyrannical interference with the fair liberty of discussion. I believe that this proposal is unnecessary, and that you can deal with the situation that has arisen better by leaving the rules as they are and showing more consideration to private Members. Therefore, on the ground of want of necessity, I say the case for this resolution has broken down.

Apart from that, the resolution itself is, in my opinion, a most extravagant one. I remember well when, in 1880, Sir Stafford Northcote, then Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House, was proposing the original very moderate rule dealing with the suspension of private Members for a day or a week, he recognised the danger of leaving it in the power of any person, no matter how highly placed, by naming a number of men to suspend them from the exercise of their function as Members. He said, on 28th May 1880:

“They recognised the importance of giving the Speaker and Chairman of Committees an opportunity of putting a stop to an offence on the spur of the moment, but they did not deem it right to give to any authority, however high, acting upon short notice, the power of suspending Members for a considerable time.”

That was the original view expressed when the resolution was first introduced. I well remember coming down to the House in 1882, when the proposal was made to extend that order and make it more oppressive—I well remember how Lord Randolph Churchill fought this proposal line by line.

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I remember well his phrase, which rang through the House when he denounced the proposal to suspend Members for one month, as a last resort, as “ a ferocious and savage ” proposal. Now it is proposed to leave in the hands of the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker—because that is what it comes to—the power of naming any number of men for disorderly conduct, and then following on that comes their suspension practically. [Cries of “ No.”] Yes; the interruption is puerile. The Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, names the men, and the House then votes for or against their suspension. That is quite true. But have we not had the experience this afternoon of how docile the House is in accepting the motion to expel men whose names are read from the Chair, even although some of those men have not been in the premises at all? I take the constitutional ground that you have no right to suspend the action of a Member of Parliament for a whole session. It is a penalty in very many cases not inflicted upon him. I know that a great number of the Members of this House do not regard their attendance here as any great pleasure or privilege. I know a number of Members whose attendance in this House means for them practically ruin in their professions, and who come here simply from a sense of public duty, and who would not suffer in the slightest degree if you suspended them for the remainder of the session. But you are inflicting a penalty on the constituency, and a penalty upon the constituency for an act to which the constituency cannot possibly be privy in any way. If you answer me by saying that the constituency ought not to elect men capable of such conduct, then I say—“ Have the courage of your convictions and expel the men.” Ah, Sir, the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich is the only man I have come across so far who is perfectly frank and honest in this matter. He has the courage of his convictions. He is going to move a proposal to the effect that instead of being suspended indefinitely we should be imprisoned indefinitely. I congratulate the noble Lord in being thorough in this matter, although I confess I am rather surprised that he did not put into his Amendment

not imprisonment, but the block. From the purely Irish point of view I desire to say that the Irish Members regard this rule with indifference and contempt—with indifference because no penalties you can devise will have the effect of deterring us from doing what we believe to be our duty, and with contempt because the penalties inflicted in this way we regard not as a reproach, but as an honour. I say that if you go on, if the House of Commons perseveres in its present course in this matter, the logical result, and the only logical result, is the disfranchisement of Ireland. I am not sure that that would not be far better. I am sure it would be a far honester system than the present one. As long as you deprive Ireland of the substance of constitutional government and preserve the empty form by bringing us here to this Parliament, where we are always in a permanent minority as compared with the representatives of another country and another nation—so long, Mr Speaker, as that is the case you will have in your midst a foreign element. There is something deeper in this matter than mere ebullitions of temper on the one side or mere new rules on the other. There is something deeper, something that goes right down to the bed-rock of this Irish question. The Irish Members, brought as they are to this House, are a foreign element in this House, and just like a foreign substance in the human body, when they are here—

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. I do not consider myself a foreign substance.

Mr JOHN REDMOND: I hope I am more experienced and more sensible than to take any notice of the interruption. I say that, just as in the human body the presence of a foreign substance is a constant source of irritation and a constant source of danger, so the presence of a foreign element in this Parliament is the same because the foreign element is made up of a body of men who are with you but not of you; a body of men to whom the ancient glories and the great traditions of this House have no meaning; a body of men who regard this House and this Parliament simply as instruments for the oppression of their country; and in

dealing with such an element I assert that no rules the wit of man can devise can possibly save your Parliament from being injured and degraded in the eyes of the world. Sir, that is the penalty that this country is paying to-day for the Union, and will continue to pay for it as long as it lasts. I say, therefore, that we treat the whole of these new rules with indifference and with contempt. I say that every such rule as you are proposing to-night is a weakening and degrading of your own Parliament, and the passing of every such rule as this amounts to the turning, if I may so say, of a searchlight upon the system of government in Ireland which will expose the system to the knowledge and criticism of the nations of the world. It discloses to the world the fact that, with all your constitutional forms, you hold one portion of the so-called United Kingdom simply by brute force. I say to you, under these circumstances, speaking for myself, and, I believe, for many, many Irish Members, go on with your new rule, suspend, expel and imprison Members, we will not be in the smallest degree deterred. So long as we are forced to come to this House to endeavour, in the midst of a foreign majority, to transact our Irish business, we will use every form of this House, every right, every privilege, every power which membership of this House gives us—we will use these things just as it seems to us to be best for Ireland, quite regardless of the opinion and so-called dignity of British Members, and absolutely careless of the penalties you may devise for our punishment. In conclusion I would only say that my own strong feeling is this, that if in your effort to hold Ireland, according to your present system of government, by force, you degrade and paralyse, and in the end destroy, this famous Assembly, it will be but a just retribution upon you for the baseness and the cruelty with which you destroyed the free Parliament of the Irish people.

THE LAND BILL OF 1903

House of Commons, 4th May 1903.

A Bill was introduced and carried by the Government of Mr Balfour for the purpose of still further facilitating the creation of a Farmer Proprietary in Ireland.

I RISE for the purpose of supporting the Second Reading of this Bill. I hope I shall not be considered wanting in proper courtesy to the two gentlemen who have given notice of opposition to the Bill if I do not treat their notices as very serious. One stands in the name of the hon. Member for South Molton, who gives certain reasons for his opposition which are not given by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent. So far as that Motion is a protest against the policy of land purchase in Ireland, I respectfully say that it is at this time of day an absurdity. For good or for evil that policy has been adopted by both parties of the House. The Liberal party, with which the hon. gentleman is associated, by the action of its responsible leaders and their votes in the Division Lobby, have made themselves responsible for a policy of land purchase. So, too, has the Unionist party. Under the operation of that policy close upon 100,000 farmers have been converted into owners, and the State has advanced the sum of £22,000,000 for the purpose, not a single sixpence of which has been lost. Under these circumstances it does seem to me almost puerile to suggest a reversal of that policy at this time of day. The Motion also alludes to what the hon. Member calls large gifts of public money. But the hon. Member, of course, is aware—as he is a well-informed man—that the money proposed to be given is Irish money. The Chief Secretary, in introducing the Measure, candidly and honestly told the House that this sum of £12,000,000 would be more than recouped by economies which could easily be effected, and had, in fact, been already partially effected

in the cost of the administration of Ireland; and I respectfully submit to the hon. Member that when he finds Irish representation on both sides of the House absolutely united as to the particular allocation of purely Irish money, he might let his conscience be at rest, and console himself with the reflection that, after all, this is none of his business. Everybody who seriously regards his present situation knows perfectly well that an opportunity has unexpectedly arisen—an unparalleled opportunity—of making an attempt to lay the foundation of social peace in Ireland, and I do not envy the responsibility of hon. Members on either side of the House whose sole contribution to the situation is to propose a Motion, which, if carried, will drive the Irish people back into a perfect hell of conflict, passions and disappointed hopes, and will destroy the best chance English statesmanship has had for the last hundred years of converting Ireland into a peaceful and prosperous country. It was my duty on the night when the Bill was introduced to speak immediately after the Chief Secretary, and to state there and then the impression the measure made on my mind; it was indeed a difficult task, and I necessarily spoke with the greatest possible reserve and caution. But, speaking now after full consideration of the measure, and after it has been subjected to most searching criticism in Ireland, I may be allowed to congratulate myself on the fact that I have nothing to change and very little to add to what I then said. The general impression which was created the night the Bill was introduced—the general impression then gathered of the object, the purpose, and the principle of the Bill, was perfectly accurate, and the blots in the Bill which I then and there, in the name of my colleagues, pointed out and condemned were the very points which have been universally condemned by public opinion in Ireland during these anxious weeks of the close examination of this Bill. I may say that of the real vital defects in this Bill there was scarcely one which was not instantly detected by my hon. friends who sit around me on these benches, and at once denounced

by me in their name. I and my friends and public opinion in Ireland recognise that in purpose and principle this is a great measure—that it is the greatest measure of land purchase reform ever seriously offered to the Irish people, and that it is intended to contain, and may quite easily be made to contain, all the elements of a settlement of the Irish agrarian difficulty, and the ending of the Irish land war, the permanent unity of all classes in Ireland, and the laying, broad and sure, of the foundations of social peace. This impression of the general purpose and principle of the Bill and its possibilities has been intensified by the examination of the measure which has taken place in Ireland. So also has been intensified our conviction that there are defects in the measure of so grave a character that they are calculated, if left without remedy, largely to destroy and defeat the entire purpose and object of the Bill. The presence of those defects in the Bill is a repetition of the old story of the British belief in their superior wisdom, knowledge and experience of the wants of Ireland. In the Land Conference landlord and tenant came together and put forward their mature judgment as to what was necessary for the settlement of this question. But unfortunately, as usual, those who are responsible for this measure thought they knew what was wanted in Ireland better than Irishmen themselves, and the terms of the Land Conference Report have been seriously departed from, and the Bill offered not what the united wisdom of landlord and tenant asked for, but something different.

The Nationalist Convention held the other day in Dublin passed as its first Resolution a declaration from which I wish to read the following words:

“That we congratulate the Irish race on the introduction by a British Ministry of a measure which for the first time in the history of land legislation in the Imperial Parliament, with the common assent of all parties in Ireland, accepts the principle that dual ownership in Ireland must end, and that, after centuries of struggle, the land of Ireland should be restored to the people of Ireland; that the acceptance of this principle promises the removal of the uncertainty, turmoil and antagonism which have so long rendered peace or contentment impossible in

Ireland; that we feel it our duty at the same time to declare that the measure requires serious amendment in various points of vital importance; and in the earnest desire to make it acceptable to all classes in Ireland, and to be put into a position to present it to our people as a final settlement of the land struggle, we request the United Irish Party to press with all their power for the amendments which this Convention may propose on these points; and that in the confident expectation that the Bill will be largely and favourably amended in Committee, this Convention entrusts to the Irish Parliamentary party the power and responsibility of deciding the attitude to be adopted towards the measure in the subsequent stages."

I have read that portion of the Resolution in order to show the House of Commons the spirit in which the Nationalist representatives approached the subject of Amendments to this Bill. Our object and the object of the Government is precisely the same. Both want a settlement of this question. Both want peace between classes in Ireland. Both want a financial arrangement which will be sound and safe alike to the State and to the tenant. Both want the landlords, after they have ceased to be landlords, to have the opportunity, if they desire, to live in their own country and take a share in the management of Irish affairs. We want the whole race to set to work in an earnest effort to repair the ravages of the past. Therefore our object and the object of the Government are precisely the same, and let me say that we will propose no Amendment in Committee on this Bill hostile to the general purpose and spirit of the measure. We will propose no Amendment that in our judgment is not absolutely necessary in order to carry out the avowed intention and purpose of the Bill, none which, in our opinion, are not really as much in the interest of the landlord as in the interest of the tenants. For my part, I may be allowed to express my earnest hope, and indeed my belief, that there will be found scarcely one of our Amendments which will not receive in the House the support of the representatives of the Irish landlords. I think I know the proper limits of a discussion on the Second Reading of a Bill, and I have therefore no intention whatever of going *seriatim* through the Amendments which we intend to

propose, and which we believe to be necessary in order to make the measure a final settlement. But there are certain defects in this Bill of so far-reaching and fatal a character that I must be allowed shortly to deal with them. First there is the question of the price which the tenant is to pay and the amount the landlord is to receive. Then there is the exclusion from the operation of the Bill of certain classes of tenants, questions of the interference of this Bill with existing rights of tenants, questions of administration and the important question of the congested districts.

I put the question of price in the forefront, because it must be manifest to everyone that it is absolutely vital to the success of the Bill, to the welfare of the individual purchaser and the future welfare of the State. The Bill provides a minimum price which every tenant must pay unless he is to be excluded from all the benefits of the Act. We protest against the fixing of a minimum price, holding it to be altogether out of place in a voluntary Bill. We claim that perfect freedom of bargaining must be left under the Bill to the landlords and tenants of Ireland. Clause 1 provides that the purchasing tenant must pay as his purchase instalment, instead of rent, 70 per cent. in one class of sale, and at least 60 per cent. in another class of judicial rents. The largest reduction a tenant can obtain under the purchase clause is 30 per cent. in the case of one class of tenants, and 40 per cent. in another. But under the existing purchase system we know that, whatever the average price may have been, there have been cases of reduction as far as 40, 45 and 50 per cent. It may be said that these are extreme cases, in the sense that they are cases of poor holdings on bad land; but no one knows better than the Chief Secretary that such cases are by no means confined to congested districts. There is scarcely an estate in the whole of Ireland, even in Ulster and the richest parts, where you will not find a certain number of these poor holdings. But the Bill only deals with them where they are in great numbers on an estate. The right

hon. gentleman has recognised that it would be ridiculous where a large portion of an estate is made up of such holdings to put the limitations of the Bill as to price in operation, and these limitations are entirely removed in the congested districts, defined as estates, where one-half of the holdings do not exceed ten acres in area and £5 in rateable value, or are of mountain or bog land. But where the holdings of this character are only a third of the estate the limitations will be imposed, with the effect either that the poor holders will be forced to buy at a price which has been proved to be extravagant, or else the Bill will fail by its exclusion of the very class of tenant whose condition constitutes the evils and the dangers of the Irish land system. If this provision remains in the Bill it will, in my opinion, seriously threaten either the security of the State, by forcing these unfortunate tenants to buy at an extravagant price, or else it will threaten the success of the measure by excluding these men from its operation. The Bill abolishes altogether the decadal system of reduction, the system established in 1896, whereby tenants were enabled to get further reductions every ten years after the first thirty. But the retention of this decadal system is that advocated by all parties in Ireland, and I hope that under these circumstances it will be possible to recast the Bill so as to give effect to this general opinion. It might be done by reducing interest from $2\frac{3}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The right hon. gentleman dissents from that, but it is worth his while to consider the matter. A resolution by Lord Dunraven's Committee suggested that economies in Irish administration should be ear-marked, and, instead of going to the reduction of charge for the bonus, should be used to set up the decadal reduction system. This is not the time to press that matter in further detail, but I do ask the right hon. gentleman to take note of the fact that all parties—every section of the landlords and all the representatives of the tenants—desire this decadal reduction system to be maintained. I hope he will be able to see some way out of this difficulty.

While I am on the question of finance let me point out

that the Bill provides that the bonus is to be distributed in inverse ratio to the amount of the purchase money. The effect of this will be to keep large estates out of the market, because in such cases, as far as the bonus is concerned, there will cease to be absolutely any inducement to sell at all. Public opinion in Ireland has taken a very decided course on this matter. The National Convention, the Landlords' Convention, and Lord Dunraven's Committee are absolutely at one in urging the desirability of having a uniform bonus, of making that bonus 15 per cent. all round on the purchase money from the beginning, provided that no landlord shall get the advantage of a bonus who does not initiate proceedings for the sale of his estate within five years. I ask the House to note the significance of the fact that, step by step, I am able to quote the recommendations of the landlords, as well as of the tenants, for my suggested alterations in the Bill. I hold a very strong opinion as to the necessity for a time limit if this Bill is to work at such a rate as will afford any prospect of the settlement of this question in our lifetime.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): Will the hon. and learned Member state where the landlords of Ireland agreed to a time limit?

Mr JOHN REDMOND: Yes, I have got it here. It is paragraph No. 3 where they state:

"We consider that the grant-in-aid should be distributed at a uniform rate of not less than 15 per cent. and by transactions initiated by the landlord within a period of five years after the passing of this Act."

I can assure the hon. and gallant gentleman that I am too old a tactician to attempt to secure a point by making a false statement. Upon all these points I am quoting, not only the opinion of the tenants, but also of the landlords. Allow me now to address a few words on the subject of the evicted tenants. I am most anxious not to rake up any subject of past conflict, controversy or bitterness, but I ask the House of Commons, composed as it is in the main, I am certain, of fair-minded men, can they expect that we upon these benches, who have been connected with this

Irish land struggle for the last twenty years and have been connected with these evicted tenants, can possibly be expected to accept as a final settlement of the Irish Land Question any scheme which excludes from its operation these men, who have risked and lost everything in the land struggle. Does any sane man inside this House dream that this measure can succeed in its great object of bringing permanent peace to Ireland if it leaves here and there over the country centres of grievance, trouble and disaffection, in the persons of disaffected tenants excluded from the Bill? No sane man can take such a view. Speaking through the mouth of those who sat on the Land Conference and upon Lord Dunraven's Committee, which speaks in the name of a large majority of the landlords, and proved by a very large vote taken some months ago that they are not hostile upon this question. They recognise that you cannot expect to have social peace if these men here and there are discontented, and I cannot conceive for a moment that the Government hold any such insane idea. In answer to an inquiry, it was with great relief to my mind that Sir Antony Macdonell wrote to me to the effect that it was not the intention of the Government to exclude any evicted tenants from the benefits of this Bill. There are limitations in Clause 2 which, if left in the Bill, must exclude a large proportion indeed of evicted tenants. I take it when we come to the Committee stage there will be no objections to absolutely removing these limits and putting the evicted tenants exactly upon the same footing as other persons, so far as limitation of amount is concerned.

I have referred to the evicted tenants for the purpose of emphasising another point, because I take it for granted that the limitations must go. The Bill provides nothing at all in the shape of powers to the Estates Commissioners or anybody else to facilitate friendly arrangements to enable old tenants to get back on to the farms which are now in the possession of new tenants; but, vastly important as this is, it is a small and circumscribed question. There are not many such cases, and I am not asking the

right hon. gentleman to put compulsion into his Bill. I am not asking that, although I think under the circumstances it would be a wise thing to do. What I am asking is to give to the Estates Commissioners sufficient powers and sufficient money to enable them to facilitate friendly arrangements whereby many of these tenants might get back their old homes. Their number is very small. I know it is very small, although I would not like to commit myself to the exact numbers. We know also from our experience that many of these tenants are not really agriculturists at all, for they are kept there at great expense by the landlord, simply as part of the land war, and we know that the Estates Commissioners, if they were practical and sensible men, if they had the powers and a small sum of money, would be able to effect friendly relations in a great majority of these cases. A suggestion was made, which struck me as a very useful one, by the *Freeman's Journal*. That journal suggested that the reserve fund should be used partly for this purpose. I may explain to the House that the reserve fund is part of the guarantee fund under the Land Act of 1891, that it was abolished by the Land Act of 1896, and at the time it was abolished it amounted, I think, to about £200,000; and now it amounts probably to not far short of £250,000. What is done with that sum under this Bill? It is given to the Land Commissioners for a purpose analogous to the one I am dealing with. It is given to the Land Commissioners for improvement works where they purchase an estate, and where they enlarge the buildings and so forth, before giving it back to the tenants. I think the suggestion is an admirable one that these Commissioners should have the power of using this £250,000, not only to improve farms before re-selling, but also for the purpose of endeavouring to bring about these friendly settlements. The amount required would be very little. When the right hon. gentleman the Member for Montrose introduced an Evicted Tenants Bill he proposed £100,000, and he proposed to take it from the Church Fund. As time has gone on the area affected by this question has undoubtedly

diminished, and if £100,000 was all that was necessary then a considerably less sum would be all that would be necessary now. I think it only a fair thing to ask the right hon. gentleman to give this power to the Commissioners, and use this fund for this purpose, as well as that of the improvement and enlargement of buildings.

This is called a voluntary Bill, and yet in one portion of it there is contained compulsion of the most serious and objectionable character upon certain classes of tenants. It is provided that where an estate is sold to the Estates Commissioners, and where three-fourths of the tenants agree to buy their holdings back from the Commissioners, then the remaining one-fourth shall be compelled to buy at a price that, presumably, they think unfair, or else in the alternative they lose once and for ever all their rights to have fair rents fixed under the Act of 1881; but it does not stop there, for it goes on to say that in every case that the Lord Lieutenant approved of, the same thing can take place where a bare majority are in favour of the sale. That has only, I think, to be stated to show what a monstrously unjust proposal it is. The landlord makes a bargain with the Estates Commissioners and sells his estate to them, and out of 100 tenants perhaps fifty-one are willing to buy their holdings at the price named by the Commission; but forty-nine think it exorbitant, and they would be beggared if they paid it. The result will be that the fifty-one men will buy and the forty-nine are deprived of the right of having their rents fixed under the Act. Here again the Irish landlords take the same view that we do. I have the resolution here, if I am challenged, where they declare that Clause 17, to which I am alluding, imposes unjust and oppressive restrictions upon the tenants and constitutes in point of fact compulsion. I think perhaps I ought to quote the words, for they are very short:

“While recognising that sales and purchase should not be impeded by the unreasonable action of small minorities, we recommend that Clause 17 of the Bill involves compulsion upon tenants to an unwarrantable extent.”

I cannot conceive that the right hon. gentleman will

hesitate for a moment to remove this blot from the Bill. When I complained of this on the first night when this Bill was introduced, the Chief Secretary answered, by means of an interruption, by saying that there was a precedent in the 40th Section of the Act of 1896; but really that is not so, because the 40th Section of that Act is entirely different. What it provides is that where three-fourths of the tenants agree to buy, the remainder, if they refuse the terms, shall be treated as if they had bought, and called upon to pay their instalments on the same basis as if they had bought; but there is no interference at all, except in that way, with their right to get a fair rent fixed under the Act of 1881. What is proposed here? The compulsion is not to compel men to buy if they refuse, the penalty is not that they should pay regular instalments on the basis of purchase, but that they shall remain as tenants, but as tenants deprived of their right under the Act of 1881 to have a fair rent fixed. Everyone must admit that it would be a monstrous thing if a little handful of tenants were able to block the purchase or sale of an estate. We all recognise that some provision of that kind ought to be in the Bill, but we protest most vehemently against giving the power to a bare majority to compel the rest. We protest against even a majority of three-fourths, and we say, whatever the proportion arrived at may be, that penalty ought to be similar to the penalty under the 4th Section of the Act of 1891 and not as provided in this Bill.

Now I want to say a word or two on the question of administration. There never was a measure proposed which so absolutely depends upon administration as this Bill. On the first night I innocently fell into a very great mistake on this matter. Understanding from the right hon. gentleman that the administration of this Bill was to be in the hands of a non-judicial tribunal, where the members would be all on an equality, where their salaries would be on the Estimates, so that we could discuss them and criticise them on the floor of the House, I rose and congratulated him heartily on the administration which he proposed in the Bill. I will not say that I was deceived,

but I was under an entire misapprehension. It is perfectly true that, so far as two of these gentlemen are concerned, they are on an equality, and their salaries are to be on the Estimates and we can discuss them. But the third member of the Commission is not to be on an equality with the other two, and whether he is called President or Chairman is a very small matter. He is, as the Bill stands, the superior, the boss of the tribunal. The two gentlemen are to have salaries of £2000 a year, I think it is, and their salaries are to be on the Estimates and we can all discuss them. But the third gentleman is to have a salary of £3000 a year, and his salary is to be on the Consolidated Fund, like that of a judge. And who, forsooth, is this gentleman? The one man in all Ireland, I believe, whom the Government could have found, against whom both landlord and tenant object. We have had considerable experience of Mr Wrench, both on the Land Commission and the Congested Districts Board, and we object to his nomination on its merits, even if he were on an equality with the other two. But when he is put in a superior position—in an unassailable position—where, if we want to attack him, all that we can do is to attack Mr Bailey, or Mr Finucane on the floor of the House, his position becomes absolutely intolerable, and I feel sure that we will be able to make a united effort in Committee on this point which will show the right hon. gentleman the absurdity of the position he has put in the Bill. Mr Wrench is still to be a Member of the Congested Districts Board, another most objectionable thing. Mr Wrench, in the belief of many of us, has been the evil spirit of the Congested Districts Board. In the opinion of many of us Mr Wrench has been responsible for the dilatoriness and lack of initiative and courage of that Board, but now he has to be in a dual capacity. He is to be the sacrosanct member of a non-judicial tribunal, whose salary is to be on the Consolidated Fund like that of a judge on the one side, and he is to remain a member of the Congested Districts Board at the same time. The positions are inconsistent. If the right hon. gentleman values his work on the Congested Districts Board

so much, in God's name let him keep him there. But if he is to be put into the position of a Land Commissioner he certainly must be taken off the Congested Districts Board.

In passing from administration, let me in a word call attention to what I cannot help characterising as an exceedingly petty, and an exceedingly mean, action on the part of those responsible for this Bill. There are at this moment besides Judge Meredith, as Land Commissioners, Mr Wrench, Mr Lynch, Mr Fitzgerald, and Mr Murrough O'Brien. Will it be believed by this House that one of these gentlemen is to be picked out to be penalised, so to speak, by this Bill? Mr Lynch is under the ordinary law certain of pension rights. Mr Wrench gets his pension rights under the Bill. Mr Fitzgerald gets his pension rights under the Bill, but Mr Murrough O'Brien, neither under the existing law nor this Bill, is entitled to any pension whatever. Now who is Mr Murrough O'Brien? He has been a public servant for thirty-three years, and a Land Commissioner for ten years, and I am speaking what everybody connected with Ireland knows is absolutely true when I say that he is the one member of the Land Commission who, in the past, has had the confidence and good-will of the tenants. It is a most audacious thing. I do not know who drafted the clause. It could not have been the right hon. gentleman himself; he would not have brought petty malice of this kind into the Bill, but somebody in Ireland is responsible for this. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: The Attorney-General.] It is a monstrous thing that a clause should be drawn in this way: that ample pensions are provided for three of the Commissioners, and one is deprived of any pension at all, and he the only one who has the confidence and good-will of the Irish tenants. Now let me pass from that matter, simply saying that I feel certain the House of Commons is too fair-minded an assembly to tolerate the exclusion of Mr Murrough O'Brien when we come to deal with this matter in Committee.

Let me come now to deal with the question which is the most important and far-reaching of all. I mean the

question of the congested districts. There was no portion of this Bill that to me was such a crushing disappointment as the portion dealing with the congested districts. I think now that the House pretty well understands what these congested districts are. Certainly the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary understand the question. They know as well as any man living that to talk about a settlement of the Irish Land Question which does not settle the Connaught question is a rank absurdity. Let me say in two sentences what our view is about the congested districts. I do not believe that you will do any good to the congested districts until you enlarge the constitution of the Congested Districts Board, until you enlarge the powers of the Board, until you give them compulsory power in some cases, and until you schedule the whole of Connaught. One of the resolutions passed by the Nationalist Convention was to the effect that the County Councils of the Congested Districts ought to be given some representation on the Congested Districts Board. That is a suggestion. I do not pin myself to one suggestion, and to one only, but I do say that I am convinced that the constitution of this Board requires to be enlarged and strengthened, that the whole procedure of the Board requires to be accelerated, and animated with a new spirit and new life, and that initiative must be instilled into that Board if it is to do any good. On the question of enlarged powers I think it will be worth my while once again to read what I have read more than once in past years—the unanimous Resolution of the Congested Districts Board themselves, passed in the year 1895, on this question of compulsion. The last time I quoted this I quoted the then Chief Secretary, who is now the President of the Board of Trade, and also the Prime Minister, as having been in favour of this Resolution because their names were signed to it. They interrupted me and said that they signed the Report, but that they did not intend the signature to carry the idea that they were in favour of this Resolution. It will be understood that I read these two names subject to that explanation. The Resolution was as follows:

“That the Congested Districts Board is in possession of information through their inspectors that there are large tracts of land that could be used to enlarge the holdings of small occupiers and promote schemes of migration in congested districts. The Board are, however, of opinion that it will be impossible for them to give effect to this important department of their work unless more funds are placed at their disposal and compulsory powers given to them to acquire such lands at their just value.”

The signatures appended to that declaration are, Mr Gerald Balfour, Sir David Harrel, Mr Charles Kennedy, the Most Rev. Dr O'Donnell, Mr Frederick W. Price, Mr Horace Plunkett, Mr James H. Tuke, Mr Frederick Wrench, Mr A. J. Balfour, Rev. W. S. Green, and the Rev. Denis O'Hara. I have never heard a satisfactory answer given to this claim. It is quite a different claim from the claim for the settlement of the Land question all through Ireland by compulsion. This is strictly confined to a small area, and the compulsion is only to be for the purpose of taking possession of lands that are not in possession of people living on, and working on, them, but simply for the purpose of taking possession of great tracts of grazing land where no human beings live at all, and on the very borders of which humanity is seething in misery and wretchedness on the bog and on the mountain. Let me enforce what I have said by a more recent declaration than the one from the Congested Districts Board. Here are two Resolutions adopted by a meeting of the Catholic Bishops of the Province of Connaught. Of course everyone who is acquainted with Ireland knows that you could not get information on a question of this kind from that part of Ireland more valuable than information coming from those Prelates. They live there amongst the people and know the facts. Scarcely any of them are political partisans of ours. They do not look at things through political spectacles, but simply look at this question and speak upon it from their own experience of their daily life among the people. Here is the Resolution passed on the 9th of April:

“That whilst recognising the immense value of the Land Bill now before Parliament, and earnestly hoping that, in an

amended form, it will become law, we desire to record our conviction that the proposals outlined in the Bill for dealing with the great question of congestion, and the cultivation of vast tracts of prairie land in the West of Ireland, are quite inadequate; larger and more extensive powers should be conferred on the Congested Districts Board throughout the entire Province, similar to the powers granted to the Crofters' Commission for Scotland."

That is a modified kind of compulsion.

"And, above all, no landlord should be enabled, with the public money, practically to purchase from himself any land outside his residential demesne, nor should any persons be allowed to purchase non-residential holdings except on condition of making them residential, and the money granted for this purpose should not, in any case, exceed £1000. We feel it our duty to declare that if the Government will not take these or similar measures to deal with this great question in a thorough-going way, the Land Question will not be settled in the West, nor the tide of emigration checked; nor can peace and contentment be restored until the grazing lands, taken from the people in that part, be given back to the men who are able and willing to work them for the maintenance of themselves and their families."

That Resolution is signed by John Healy, Archbishop of Tuam (in the Chair); Francis Joseph MacCormack, Bishop of Galway; John Lyster, Bishop of Achonry; John Conmy, Bishop of Killala; and John Clancy, Bishop of Elphin. I do not think it is possible for me to exaggerate the importance to a wise Minister who has charge of an Irish Bill of paying attention to a declaration of that kind. Again, we are on the same ground as the landlords in our demands. Here, again, I can quote the Irish landlords, because in the Land Conference Report, agreed to by the representatives of the landlords as well as by us, there is a paragraph referring to the congested districts, and outlining almost precisely what is claimed here now on our behalf at this moment. I must guard myself from wearying the House, and pass from the Congested Districts Board with the simple declaration that its constitution ought to be enlarged and strengthened, its powers increased, and the whole of Connaught ought to be scheduled within its jurisdiction.

In regard to the Irish labourers in connection with this Bill I really do not know what to say. Honestly, I cannot fathom the reason which induced the right hon. gentleman to put his name to these clauses in the Bill. If he had said to us that this was a great measure, and that he could not deal with two or three different subjects at the same time, and that he would leave over the labourers' question to be dealt with in a separate Bill, we could have understood the position. But what he has done is to put into this Bill clauses dealing with the Labourers Acts which are absolutely worthless and futile. I say that if the labourers were to be asked to take these clauses as they stand, or nothing at all, they would say, "Strike them out." These clauses are a mockery of the claims of the labourers; they are almost adding insult to injury; and I am convinced that, whoever put them into this Bill, they do not represent the full mind and the intention of the right hon. gentleman on the labourers' question; and I cannot fathom why they were placed in the Bill, unless he is prepared to accept a series of new clauses, which we propose to submit, totally changing the character of these proposals, taking them right out of the Bill, because as they stand they are little better than a mockery. There are innumerable other questions on which I might speak at some length, some of them of vital importance. There is the question of the perpetual rent-charge against which the opinion of Ireland is practically unanimous. There is the question also of making quite sure the position of future tenants and of caretakers, although on that point I am satisfied, from declarations which have been made, that the shortcomings of the Bill will be remedied, and that the right hon. gentleman has no purpose of excluding them from the benefits of the Bill. There are innumerable other points of vital importance which must stand over until we come to consider them in Committee, for it is manifest that it is impossible for me to dwell upon them now at any length. The hon. Member for East Mayo, who, I am glad to say, is back amongst us in restored health, will speak on these questions if he gets the opportunity before the Debate

closes to-night, and he, I feel sure, will repair the omissions I have made, and will probably speak more fully and with greater force upon some of the important questions I have dealt with. I must therefore leave the matter at the point to which I have come.

Let me in conclusion address a few words of advice, and a few words, if I may be allowed to do so, of serious warning to the Chief Secretary. Never before—let him never forget that—since the Act of Union has an English Minister in Ireland the chance that he now has of successfully dealing with this Irish agrarian difficulty. Ireland to-day is united in her demands in almost all essentials. As I have pointed out, landlords and tenants are in agreement. Both sides have made concessions for the sake of peace. The advisers and the leaders of the tenants have incurred great risks and exposed themselves to much misrepresentation; they have undertaken very grave and serious responsibility in their efforts to save their country from a continuation of the land war which for so long has desolated Ireland, and in behalf of peace. They have made many concessions, and I ought to be the first to admit with gratitude and with pride that the people have stood by them with magnificent loyalty. Well, we have come back here now from our country with the mandate of our people on this Bill, and fortified by a vote of complete and absolute confidence. We are asking nothing unreasonable. We are only asking for Amendments on those matters which I have indicated. It is more probable that we Irishmen, the persons concerned, the landlords and tenants combined, take a right view on these matters than you Englishmen. We ask you only to make concessions to the practically united demands of the Irish people of all classes, whose interest in this matter is the same as yours, and must be deeper and higher than yours in the settlement of this question and the pacification of Ireland. I would say to the right hon. the Chief Secretary—“If you listen to the voice of Ireland this matter will be settled, and unborn generations of Englishmen and Irishmen alike will through all time applaud your wisdom and your

statesmanship. Do not, I entreat you, lose heart in your efforts. Other efforts of English statesmanship have failed again and again in the past just because they fell a little short of what was necessary to settle the problem. Let it be the glory of the Chief Secretary to be thorough. For the first time in the history of the connection between England and Ireland be thorough in your policy." I am bound at the same time to say that if the right hon. gentleman rejects the advice which comes to him from the landlords and the tenants alike; if, like so many of his predecessors, he rejects and despises Irish public opinion, and refuses the reasonable Amendments which will come to him with the sanction of both parties to the contest, then I warn him that we shall be forced to wash our hands of all responsibility. Under such circumstances as that the right hon. gentleman may pass this measure unamended into law, but he will be the first to admit that a measure passed under such conditions will not only not close this question, but will only add one more to that long list of well-intentioned but futile efforts to settle the Irish problem by the force of English public opinion and English judgment. With all my heart I pray that that state of things may not arise. I think it would be, in truth, little short of a tragedy if now, under the blessed circumstances of this moment, the right hon. gentleman were, either through failure to appreciate the various forces at his back and the enormous power he wields, with all classes united behind him, or through an unbending and unreasonable defiance of Irish public opinion—it would be little short of a tragedy if the Government were to throw away this golden opportunity which, once lost, in all human probability will not recur in the lifetime of this generation. If this happens the guilt will not rest on the Irish National representatives. We will go into Committee on this Bill in a friendly, practical, business-like and reasonable spirit, and I beseech the right hon. gentleman and the Government to meet the claims which we put forward in a spirit of reason and conciliation.

THE FAILURE OF ENGLISH GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND

House of Commons on 4th February 1904.

I MAKE no apology, Mr Speaker, for intervening at the earliest possible moment to call the attention of Parliament to the Irish question, and to the well-nigh universal demand of the Irish people for a radical change in the system of Government under which their country has been pauperised and depopulated in the past. I know that there are a great many people in this country, of all parties, who quite naturally are anxious, if they can, to get rid of the Irish question even for a day, and I noticed with interest that in all the speeches made on the Address to the Throne yesterday not one solitary reference whatever was made by any speaker to Ireland. Now, I think that feeling is perfectly natural, but what does, I am bound to say, surprise me is that there seem to be serious statesmen on both sides of this House who appear to think it is possible to get rid of the Irish question. Greater delusion than this was never entertained. You cannot get rid of the Irish question. Nothing that you can do, either by the way of force on the one side or concession on the other, can relieve you from the necessary consequences of maintaining in Ireland a system of Government opposed to the will of the governed. These consequences are chronic unrest and discontent in Ireland, and chronic disturbance here in this Parliament. The truth is, this problem is too vast, too far-reaching, and too urgent for it to be possible to cease even for a few short months to trouble the public mind in England, to intrude itself into the consideration of great English questions, and to haunt and disturb the serenity of your Parliament. At this moment all England is stirred by the fiscal question, and the British people are

appealed to with passionate earnestness to save the Empire by conciliating the colonies. But every honest man must know that the conciliation of the colonies fades into insignificance compared with the importance of the conciliation of Ireland. We are told that there is no concession too great to be made for the purpose of buying the continued friendship of Canada and Australia. Why, Sir, for this purpose you are asked actually to uproot those great principles of fiscal policy which for fifty years you have all regarded as the very foundation of your greatness and prosperity, and you are told, at the same time and from the same quarter, to disregard altogether the hostility of Ireland, to make no sacrifice to win her friendship, though every man well knows that so long as Ireland's hostility to the Empire continues, so long all the talk about the unity of the Empire is mere clap-trap, and that Ireland contented, Ireland peaceful, Ireland friendly, would be of more value to the Empire than the possession of all the colonies put together. This question of discontent and disloyalty to the Empire in Ireland is one which I say you cannot get rid of for a single day. I noticed, with great interest, that quite recently the Duke of Devonshire solemnly declared that there was no room for two great questions like the fiscal question and the Irish question at the same time, and yet within one week after that declaration the Gateshead election took place, where, in spite of the votes of both English parties, the issue in the end turned not upon Protection or Free Trade, but upon Home Rule for Ireland, and was decided by the votes of Irish Home Rulers in the constituency.

Some men seem to think that because last year* we obtained a valuable Act of Parliament remedying some of the evils of your past misgovernment, that therefore the Irish question would be heard of no more, that it was shelved. Such an idea argues an absolute ignorance of the very essence of this Irish question. No concession can weaken the force of our demand for self-government. On the contrary, every concession strengthens that demand

* The Land Act of 1903.

and strengthens our arms, and every concession we have obtained, and every concession we may obtain, will be used by us for the furtherance of the remainder of the contest for self-government. I read the other day a letter written by the right hon. gentleman the Member for West Leeds, who is the chief Whip of the Liberal party, to one of his constituents, in which he said:

“So far as I am concerned I am a Home Ruler, but I have frequently said to my constituents that the Nationalist party have accepted, at anyrate for the present, the alternative policy of the Conservative party.”

I read that statement with amazement. It disclosed to me a strange and, in the right hon. gentleman, an utterly unaccountable inability to understand the real meaning of this Irish question. It was, as a matter of fact, an entire misrepresentation of our attitude. We accepted no alternative policy. We accepted the Land Act of last year just as we accepted the Land Act of 1881, just as we accepted the Local Government Act of 1898, just as we accepted every Act which has removed or mitigated any Irish grievance, and we would indeed be fools did we not do so. But to say we accepted any, or all, of these things as an alternative policy to Home Rule is absurd, and it is untrue, and this statement from a high official source like the right hon. gentleman the Member for West Leeds, the Chief Whip of the Liberal party, makes it necessary, in my opinion, for us to define our position once more, if not for the benefit of those who are the Government to-day, then for the benefit of those who hope to be the Government to-morrow—and who, for all I know, may be hugging the comfortable delusion at this moment that they can obtain Irish support on an alternative policy. Now I repeat that for us there is no such thing as an alternative policy to Home Rule. If your Government in Ireland were as good as it is notoriously and admittedly bad we would be still Home Rulers. Our position is that we assert we have the right to rule ourselves. We certainly have the capacity and the knowledge, and the intimate sympathy which you have not, but above all that we say we have the

right. That right we will never surrender, and we say without the slightest hesitation that Ireland would prefer to be governed even badly by her own Parliament than to be governed well by the Parliament of any other nation in the world. But we are not governed well. Your Government in Ireland not only springs from usurpation and wrong, from violence and corruption—which is denounced and admitted to-day by all your greatest writers and historians—it is not only a Government which depends every hour of its existence upon a small minority in Ireland and is every hour of its existence in direct opposition to the will of the majority of the governed, but your Government, on its merits, is a bad Government, a wasteful, extravagant, corrupt and inefficient Government.

We have heard a great deal in recent years from some distinguished quarters about efficiency. Well, the English Government of Ireland is the most inefficient Government in the whole world. It is wasteful in every department, it is corrupt in every department. Perhaps I ought to stop for one moment to explain the meaning of "corrupt." I do not at all mean corrupt in the vulgar sense of bribing by money to do disgraceful things, although such things have happened. What I mean is—I put it in this way—the only class in Ireland that supports the Government is the class of the placemen. For the minority in Ireland, for every happy child who is born as a member of the loyal minority in Ireland, there is a place of some sort or kind. I am a member of the Irish Bar, and it is not likely I would make any disgraceful accusation against the Irish Bar, but I venture to assert there is not a member of the Irish Bar who is a supporter of the English Government, and an opponent of Ireland, who is not pretty certain, if he has any brains at all, before long to get a place. I say that is corruption, and I say it is true to say to-day in that sense, as was said by Mr Lecky of the English Government, that the whole unbribed intellect of Ireland was against you. And I say, in addition to being wasteful and corrupt, the Government is inefficient. Let me give an example of what I mean.

To-day, admittedly, Ireland lags behind every nation in Western Europe in trade, commerce, agriculture, in technical skill, in science, and in art. Why? Is it because the Irish race are less talented than the people of any other race in the world? Anyone who knows anything of the history of the world, and especially anyone who knows anything of the history of the British Empire, will make no such assertion. No; Ireland lags behind in the race of nations because there is no nation in which education has been so denied, neglected and starved. There is not any test of a Government better than this test of education, and I say the Government, which for a century has denied, neglected and starved education, is a Government which cannot justify its existence before the public opinion of the world. That is what you have done in Ireland. First of all you denied education altogether and made it a penal offence. Then you established a system of education which to-day has no parallel in the whole history of the world, and that system you maintain down to this moment.

Let me first take the case of primary education. I leave on one side what may be regarded as matters of ancient history. I deal to-day with the system in force at this very moment. The system of primary education in Ireland to-day came into existence so far back as the year 1831. Lord Stanley, then the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant, who, I think, was Lord Grey, formed a Board of unpaid gentlemen called a National Education Board, and the whole primary education of the country was put into the hands of these gentlemen, and that Board exists down to this very day unchanged, except in one small particular, from the year 1831. That Board is absolutely unrepresentative. It is absolutely irresponsible. From an educational point of view, as I will show you, it is admittedly incompetent, and through its whole history it is anti-national in its feelings. The Board consists, I think, of sixteen members unpaid, and a paid Resident Commissioner. There is no qualification for membership on this Board at all. The only one essential condition is that it shall be half Catholic and half Protestant. At first I think

only one-third of the Board was Catholic and two-thirds Protestant. This Board is made up of most worthy and estimable country gentlemen, country squires, country landlords. Five of the members of the Board are learned Judges, whose presence on the Board I cannot for the life of me understand, and others of them are officials who have retired from other departments of service, and, so far as anyone has ever been able to find out, not a single one of these men is selected for any educational qualification whatever. I do not want to weary the House, and therefore I would refrain from reading the names, but if anybody calls in question the accuracy of my description I will read the names. There is Mr Edmund Dease, a respectable landlord, Mr James Morrell, Sir Henry Bellingham, another most estimable landlord, Chief Baron Pallas, Judge Shaw, and so on right through the list. No one will controvert my assertion that there is no qualification required, and therefore this Board is totally unrepresentative. I say in addition it is irresponsible. No one represents this Board in this House. No one has authority to speak for that Board in this House. No one has authority over that Board in Ireland. Neither the Chief Secretary, nor any department of Dublin Castle, has any authority over this Board. We have repeatedly had experience in this House of the Chief Secretary rising to answer questions about primary education, and he has always complained of the fact that, although he was the channel to convey information to this House, he had no authority over this Board, that the Board held its meetings in secret, and that when he applied for information they were perfectly entitled to deny the information if they chose. Was such an absurd system ever heard of as a Board of this character, responsible to no one in this House, nor to the Government in Ireland, or anyone else? The Board is anti-national and has been through its whole history. There is not amongst these Commissioners at this moment one single man who is in sympathy with the wishes and aspirations of the national feeling of the Irish people. Is it not ludicrous that a Board of this kind, charged with the duty of education of the little

children of the Irish race, should not have one solitary representative of national feeling on its body. The natural result of all that has been that the tendency of this Board all through has been to denationalise the little children of the Irish race. Irish history, Irish poetry, the Irish language, everything Irish has been banished from its schools. It was only the other day, after a bitter and vehement contest, that we were able to force this Board to allow the little Irish-speaking children coming out of Irish-speaking homes to be taught through the medium of the Irish language. I would like to quote a few words written by Mr Starkie, the Resident Commissioner, the paid servant of this Board, as to the merits of his employers. He says:

“I fancy few practical educationalists will deny that the National Board were guilty of a disastrous blunder in thrusting upon a Gaelic-speaking race a system of education produced after a foreign model, and utterly alien to their sympathies and antecedents. Such an attempt was unsound, both philosophically and practically. Neglecting the principles of continuity which pervades all human things, it disregarded the home training and associations of the children, and thus rending in twain the nascent intelligence, rendered all real development impossible. True education is a refining and developing of the whole intellectual life and character, and I think there can be little doubt that the Board were guilty of narrow pedantry in neglecting as worthless the whole previous life of the pupil, and the multitude of associations, imaginations and sentiments that formed the content of his consciousness. The consequences of such a system are inevitable. To this unhappy blunder may be attributed the want of initiative, and independence and distaste of knowledge, which so hampers the industrial development of Ireland—qualities so alien to the quick sympathies and alert intelligence, which are the most salient characteristics of our race.”

Thus, Sir, the administration of this Board has been, from an educational point of view, narrow and incompetent even on the authority of their own Resident Commissioner, and from an Irish point of view has been grossly anti-national. I do not care to go into the question further than to point out that, whatever may be the case to-day, when this Board was established it was run, from a religious point of view, on bigoted and most dishonest lines.

That can be proved by referring to the declaration of Archbishop Whateley, when he declared in so many words that the object of the Board was to proselytise the Catholic children of Ireland. He said:

“The education supplied by the National Board is gradually undermining the vast fabric of the Irish Roman Catholic Church. I believe, as I said the other day, in mixed education (as carried out in the system of the National Education Board) we have the only hope of weaning the Irish from the abuses of Popery. But I cannot venture openly to profess this opinion.”

This quotation is taken from a diary of the Archbishop, which of course did not see the light for many days after it was written. Under the blessings of English rule you have primary education in the hands of a Board established in 1831, entirely unrepresentative, absolutely irresponsible, anti-Catholic in its inception, anti-national down to this moment, so incompetent that it is denounced and condemned by its own Resident Commissioner, and so incapable of reform that Archbishop Walsh resigned his position on that Board in absolute despair. No wonder that this system of education is to-day unanimously denounced by the people of Ireland, and no wonder that Ireland lags behind the nations of the world in all the essentials of prosperity and advancement. What is the remedy? The only possible remedy is Home Rule. This antiquated, irresponsible, unrepresentative, narrow-minded, bigoted and incompetent Board must be swept into the dust-bin. It would not be tolerated in England for twenty-four hours. What we want is a Department of Education responsible to the public opinion of Ireland. That is the only possible remedy, but it is not possible so long as Ireland is deprived of the right of self-government. To abolish the Board, as I have heard some people suggest, and to put their absolute power into the hands of a new ring of irresponsible officials in Dublin Castle, would be to alienate still more the confidence of the Irish people. We want a Department of Education responsible to the public opinion of Ireland, and this we cannot have until we have self-government. And

so the disgraceful and ruinous tragedy of the neglect of Irish primary education goes on.

The same story is true of intermediate education. Many members of the Intermediate Education Board are eminent men, but none of them can be picked out as educational authorities or as qualified for the work upon which they are engaged. For twenty years the Intermediate Board had full control of intermediate education, and they carried on a system of cramming and payment by results to such an extent that they did irreparable injury to the education of the youth of the country. But at last the people cried shame upon them, and they had to admit their failure. With a touch of true Gilbertian humour they resolved themselves into a Commission to inquire into the defects of their own work. Since then there has been some improvement, but so recently as the 1st of April last year the Chief Secretary declared that under the present system the money devoted to intermediate education was money thrown away.

"Money," said he, "has been lavished on Intermediate Education in Ireland. . . . But how can such expenditure be turned to good account when Elementary Education is not levelled up to the necessary standard, when only 55 per cent. of the children attend the schools, and when continuation schools do not exist? Money devoted to Intermediate Education under such circumstances is money thrown away."

If that be the state of inefficiency of the Government of Ireland in primary and intermediate education, if that be the disgraceful story of the neglect and starvation of the education of Irish children in primary and intermediate schools, what is to be said about the question of Irish University education? The inefficiency of the Government in this vital matter, its dishonest evasion of an admitted duty, its unwillingness, or incapacity, or both, to remove an admitted grievance which poisons the whole life of Ireland, and which condemns Ireland to hopeless failure in the struggle with the nations of the world for existence—I say the treatment of this question by the Government, taken alone, is sufficient to utterly and completely damn

and condemn their whole system of the government of the country. For fifty years this grievance has been admitted, and every attempt made to deal with it has failed for the same reason that has destroyed every effort of this House to deal with Irish grievances, namely, because it was an effort made by men who did not understand the requirements of Ireland, and who would not listen to the advice of the Irish people. You establish first a Queen's University, Queen's Colleges, in Ireland. They were denounced by O'Connell in the name of the Catholic laity, and by the Irish Bishops on behalf of the clergy. Their failure is admitted, and the Queen's University is dead and gone. In disregard of Irish advice you then establish an Examining Board, which you dignify by the name of a Royal University. After twenty years your Royal Commission has declared that this Royal University also is a failure, and must go. You of the Conservative party, representing a Conservative Government, pledged yourselves publicly and privately to deal with this question year after year, and session after session, until your pledges on this subject have become a by-word in Ireland. In 1885 the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was then Leader of the House, explicitly and solemnly pledged the Government that if they were in office next session they would introduce a practical measure to remedy this grievance. They were in office "next session," and with the exception of three years they have been in office ever since, and that pledge has never been redeemed. In 1889, in answer to Mr Parnell in this House, the present Prime Minister pledged himself on behalf of the Government to produce a Bill dealing with this question next session.

In August 1889 Mr Parnell questioned Mr Balfour on this subject, and asked whether any immediate steps were in contemplation, and whether the Government proposed to make this important subject one of the earliest Government measures next session, and in reply Mr Balfour said:

"With regard to the question put to me by the hon. Member for Cork, I have to say that there is, of course, no possibility

of dealing with this question except under a Bill, and I cannot give any pledge at this moment as to the exact order in which the various questions will be dealt with by the Government next session."

He spoke then as Chief Secretary, and it might be said that he spoke for himself, and not in the name of the Government, that really he was outstepping the limits of his authority, and that he had no right to make such a declaration. But the right hon. gentleman is now Prime Minister, and I want to know by what rule of morality he can now refuse when he has authority, when he is Leader of this House and Prime Minister of this country—how he can justify the refusal to carry out those pledges which he gave. From 1885 to this moment those pledges have remained unfulfilled. The truth is, that the Conservative party are playing with this question and fooling with it, and they have found it, I am afraid, somewhat useful to them in dealing with Irish parties. They are doing the same to-day. Lord Dunraven the other day published a letter in the Irish newspapers, in which he formulated a scheme for the settlement of this question. Now that scheme was represented to us in Ireland as the Government scheme. That was put forward as representing the Government scheme. We were told, in addition, that that scheme would receive the support of the Ulster Presbyterians, because they are very closely interested in this matter. Part of the scheme was to make Queen's College, Belfast, one of the component colleges of the University of Dublin, and, of course, to give large endowments to Queen's College, Belfast, so as to bring it into a proper position to meet the needs of that great city. We were told that the Ulster Presbyterians were favourable to this scheme. Well, what about the Catholics? I took it upon myself, speaking to my constituents a few weeks ago, to say that in my judgment the scheme would have been accepted by both the hierarchy and laity of the Catholic Church any time for the last twenty years. They have the whole Irish Government unanimously in favour of it. The Chief Secretary, the Lord-Lieutenant, and Sir Antony Macdonell. I do

not know which is the more eager and enthusiastic on this question. They have the Prime Minister of England in favour of it. According to statements that have been made, they have a very large section of the Cabinet in favour of it. Some of the statements represent that an overwhelming majority of the Cabinet were in favour of it, and yet because Lord Londonderry goes down to Belfast and addresses a meeting of rabid Orangemen, and says that he will oppose this scheme, it is put on one side. The whole question once more is to be shelved.

Now I may be told that there are great difficulties in the way of that scheme. Not only Lord Londonderry and his friends, but certain Senior Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, are opposed to it. Let me say to the right hon. gentleman that we are not wedded to this particular scheme. If the right hon. gentleman finds it easier to fall back on the scheme of the Royal Commission, well let him do so, and that will be candidly, fairly, and impartially considered by us. What he has no right to do is to attempt to shelve this question and to hang it up indefinitely. Now I will be perfectly plain and straightforward on this matter. I think I quite see through the Government's game. My honest belief—I do not say it personally to the right hon. gentleman, and let him not take it to himself individually ; I am speaking of the Government—I am firmly convinced that they intend to humbug and befool the Irish Members on this question. Lord Londonderry, I believe, was right when he said in Belfast that no responsible Minister had ever proposed a Catholic University. Nobody has said that it was to establish a Catholic University. That is not the scheme. There is no proposal to establish a Catholic University. A correspondent writes to Lord Londonderry and says that the phrase was equivocal, and that while his Lordship might be against a Catholic University he might be in favour of Lord Dunraven's scheme. He asked for a specific reply on Lord Dunraven's scheme. What was the answer? A letter in yesterday's *London Times*, in which Lord Londonderry said that no responsible Minister—we were told that this thing was to be submitted to the

Cabinet ; apparently it has not—that no responsible Minister had ever made such a proposal as Lord Dunraven's scheme. I think Lord Londonderry was right when he said in a speech at Belfast that the Government, as a whole, has no intention, and never had any intention, of introducing a scheme for the settlement of this question, and that all their pledges, assurances and promises were false as dicers' oaths. But they want to remain in office for the rest of this session, and no doubt these mysterious negotiations about which we have all heard a great deal in months past in Ireland—all these private assurances about the Cabinet, about the Government, and about this scheme and that scheme, and all the public pledges—I suppose we will have a repetition of these again to-night—were simply intended for the purpose of inducing the Irish Members to refrain from attack. More than that, I fancy that when the Government go to the electors when the General Election does come, they would like very much to have these pledges about a Catholic University in the air, so that they might successfully attempt to wheedle and humbug the Irish voters in Great Britain to vote for their candidates in every case, in the supposition that they were in favour of a Catholic University. Let me tell the Government perfectly plainly that their game is too transparent in this matter. It has been played too often, and it will fail this time. The Irish people are saying to the Government to-day:

“ And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
That palter with us in a double sense ;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.”

To-night I call on the right hon. gentleman for an explicit statement on this matter. Let us get out of this region of fog. Let us get out of this region we have been living in in Ireland of private negotiations and private indications that this person was favourable and that person favourable, and that everything would go right before the end of the session. Let us come down to the plain facts.

What is the right hon. gentleman going to do? I think I ought to make an explicit statement to him, and I say that, on this question of the settlement of the University question, nothing short of the immediate introduction of legislation this session will satisfy us. We thus have three branches of education—primary, intermediate and university—marked by the same inefficiency under English rule in Ireland. Now I ask any impartial man whether the case for Home Rule is not complete if I stopped here and did not say one other word. The Government which, for a whole century, has thus bungled, neglected, and starved education—primary, secondary and university—cannot justify its existence.

But after all education, vital as it is, is only one department or element in the national life of our country. In every other department the inefficiency is the same. The same ignorance, the same dishonesty, the same failure. Take for instance the case of the financial relations between the two countries. You are niggardly of education in Ireland, but you are prodigal of taxation. Ireland some years ago accused Great Britain of robbing her of several millions a year, and that accusation became so insistent that you were forced to investigate it. A tribunal was appointed for the purpose. Now, let the House mark, Great Britain was the defendant, Great Britain appointed the tribunal herself, Great Britain packed the tribunal herself with all her own greatest financial authorities. Yet that tribunal, so appointed and constituted, brought in a verdict in favour of Ireland, a verdict to the effect that Ireland was over-taxed to the extent of about £3,000,000 a year, and that that had gone on for half a century. That was in 1893-4. Since then, so far from relief having been given, £3,000,000 additional has been put upon Ireland, and in the most cruel way, because it has been added almost entirely to the taxation of the poor. You in this country have been engaged, and you boasted of it, in the task of endeavouring to bring down indirect taxation, at anyrate to the level of direct taxation. But you did not do so in Ireland. The indirect taxation of Great Britain is nearly 50

per cent. of the whole. In Ireland it is 75 per cent. of the whole, and every addition you have made to the burden of Ireland for the last ten years has been a burden that has fallen upon the poorer classes of the community. When the result of the Financial Relations Inquiry was first made known your answer was that the inquiry had not been sufficiently full, that there were other portions of the case to be considered, and you said a new Commission was to be appointed. You have not since appointed that Commission, and you never suggested it since, and you have gone on, during all those ten years that have passed, piling up the taxation of the country; and the last defence made to this House by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer a couple of years ago was of the most audacious character. He said the general taxation of the whole of the three countries has been enormously increased in consequence of the war. Ireland, being the poorest part of the United Kingdom, has contributed the smallest proportion of this general taxation, "Therefore," he said, "your grievance has disappeared." Of course, according to that doctrine, all you have to do is to go on increasing the taxation of Ireland, and when you have added three or four or five millions more to her taxation your Chancellor will say, "Why, I have wiped out all your grievance." I am bound to say the Chief Secretary does not take that view at all. I heard with deep gratification some of his declarations last year. I remember when he used these words:

"He really believed Ireland had been a sufferer, and he was quite sure that the question whether or not the two countries had received as partners in the common Exchequer, founded in 1813, their fair share of the mutual advantages was a question which should not be left in obscurity as now."

Yes, it is left in obscurity now, and I say it is a monstrous injustice that while this question is being hung up in this way, and after the verdict of the late Commission, you should go on piling up the general burden on Ireland. Not only has the general burden been increased, but in every conceivable way Ireland is being cheated every year

by the British Treasury. Let me take one example of what I mean. When the equivalent grants were first established the principle was laid down by Mr Goschen that Scotland and Ireland were entitled to get from the General Exchequer a proportionate sum for their purposes. And the proportion was fixed by Mr Goschen at eighty for England, eleven for Scotland, and nine for Ireland. We always, on these benches, protested against that proportion; we have always said that it was grossly unfair, but we were powerless in the matter. Last year the Chief Secretary came to our aid when in this House he declared that we were right all through, that the proportion was quite unfair, and he proposed quite a different basis, which he put into the Irish Development Fund Bill. Speaking on this question, he said:

“On other similar occasions, in 1889 and 1890, I think the equivalent grant to Ireland and to Scotland (England, eighty; Scotland, eleven; and Ireland, nine) was calculated upon the proportion of taxation coming from Ireland or Scotland to the common Exchequer. That leads to results which all must hold to be illogical, and results which everybody in Ireland holds to be unjust, because the greater the increase of the taxation the less is the proportion that comes from Ireland, the poorest partner in the business, and so the less is her equivalent grant. As the evil increases the remedy diminishes, and you have only to force up taxation to a sufficiently high point to extinguish the remedy altogether, or to give it in what may be called homeopathic doses. Therefore we make this new departure. We say that the set-off to Ireland shall be calculated, not upon the quota coming from Ireland, as compared with the quota coming from England, towards common purposes, but shall be calculated on the population of the two countries as revealed by the last census.”

I do beg the House, which is often carried away with the idea that we on these benches are given to exaggeration, to listen to how this system of equivalent grants has worked out. Take, for example, the question of technical instruction:

“What are the results? In the nine years, in the case of England, between 1892 and 1900, sums amounting to £6,276,404 were devoted to technical instruction in England

and Wales. Ireland lost two years altogether in that period, but in the remaining seven years she was only able to spend £71,900 on technical instruction, and out of that comparatively insignificant sum no less than £55,000 was expended in the last year."

That is to say, Ireland has been robbed by that transaction of a vast sum of money in connection with grants for technical education.

"Ireland had to dash down the money on some ill-considered project or lose it altogether."

It was to remedy this that a policy of setting up the Devolution Fund Grant was initiated so that Ireland should not be defrauded of its fair share of the grant from the common Exchequer of the United Kingdom, and it was to protect Ireland that the Chief Secretary felt it his duty to adopt the new fiscal method. Now if the basis for the equivalent grants in 1889 and 1890, namely, 80-11-9, was unjust, as it is now admitted to be, we have been robbed every year that has passed of large sums of money, which by now amount to a vast figure; and mark the injustice is a continuing one, for the admitted unjust basis remains in force with reference to all equivalent grants before the one of last year. In my opinion that is a good instance of the way in which not only is the general burden of the taxpayers heaped up in Ireland, but where, in every individual case that is possible, the British Exchequer robs Ireland of her fair share of grants from common taxation. We are robbed therefore not only in education but in money. And what of the legislative work? Every year in the last century this Parliament has proved its incapacity or unwillingness, or both, of passing legislation satisfactory to Ireland. Let me take as an example the Land Act of last year. On that question this Parliament passed some forty or fifty Land Acts, but so ignorant was this Parliament of the task and of the real meaning of the problems which it had to grapple with; so incompetent was it for the task of governing Ireland; so deaf was it to the voice of the Irish Members, that all these forty or fifty

Acts of Parliament were absolutely valueless, and last year you found yourselves confronted with the Irish land question once more in an acute phase.

And believe me, you are not yet done with the question. Last year I most freely admit Parliament was anxious and willing to settle this great question, and I say that the failure of the Act of last year in so many respects proves in a startling manner that even when this Parliament has the will and provides the necessary, time it has not the capacity to legislate satisfactorily for Ireland. What happened last year? The Irish Members put forward certain Amendments which they considered, in their judgment, were essential in order to make it a workable and a satisfactory measure. Some of these Amendments were opposed on their merits as mischievous by the Government, and they were defeated. Other of these Amendments, which we declared to be absolutely necessary for the proper and effective working of the Bill, were declared by the Government to be unnecessary, and we were induced to withdraw them by pledges from the Ministers and from the law officers of this House that the phraseology of the Bill, as it stood, carried out our intention. And what has been the ludicrous result? Why, an Irish Judge has already given a decision — and those who followed the Bill with any interest last year will see the force of what I am saying — to the effect that the bonus cannot be handed over to the tenant for life. That blocks out, in my judgment, something like three-fourths of the landlords of Ireland; and the Irish law officer who sat on that bench opposite during the discussions on that Bill, who heard the Chief Secretary making all his speeches and giving all his promises, and making those statements which induced us to withdraw our Amendments, has now, on other portions of the Bill, given opinions totally at variance with the opinions of the Chief Secretary, and which, if enforced, will, in the judgment of most men who know anything of Ireland, render the Act an absolute nullity so far as Connaught and the congested estates are concerned. That is to say that they will make the Act of last year worthless as an engine of

peace in those very places where the land agitation has been most acute. What an argument for Home Rule! What answer is to be given to it? I admit that last year you did your best; you were anxious to settle the land question, but you would not listen to our advice; you would not take our Amendments, and you have floundered once again into hopeless failure on many phases of this question. The whole question of the working of the Land Act will come up for discussion at a later period, and therefore what I have to say on that subject I will reserve till then. So far as I am concerned for the moment, I only allude to the Land Act as an illustration of my argument, which is that nothing can be satisfactory in the government of Ireland except the restoration of the rights of self-government to the Irish people. I take it for granted that the Chief Secretary will introduce an amending Bill this session, although no mention is made of it in the King's Speech. All I can say is that so far as we are concerned no so-called amending Bill will be accepted by us unless it deals with all the defects which have been disclosed in the Act from the point of view of the tenants, as well as from the point of view of the tenant for life and the landlords.

Now I might go through every other department of Irish government. I might deal with the Irish Local Government Board—the most absurd system of government in the world—where you have freely-elected governing bodies of the people thwarted and interfered with at every stage by a body which is quite irresponsible, and over which the people of Ireland have no control at all, and in the membership of which is Mr Richard Bagwell, who was appointed after the Act of 1898 was passed, a gentleman who signalised his appointment by instantly denouncing as an outrage the right of the people of Ireland to local government, which he was appointed to administer. I might deal with the Board of Works, where the right hon. gentleman has placed his late private secretary, Mr Hanson, as one of the three administrators of this important Irish Department. I have nothing to say against Mr Hanson. He has served the right hon. gentleman well. I always

found him most courteous, obliging and competent, and I am sure that he is a very able young man. But after all, is this a system of government which will stand examination: that those young English gentlemen who have served for two years as private secretaries are to be brought over from England and put in charge of a great working department of Irish government to the absolute exclusion of Irishmen. I might go through all these departments one after the other and show the failure of English government. This system which I have endeavoured to sketch cannot be mended; it is too rotten to be mended; the only remedy is to end it. "I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle; to sweep away altogether these alien boards of foreign officials, and to substitute for them a genuine Irish Administration for purely Irish affairs." These are the words of the right hon. gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. What has changed since 1885 to make these alien boards of foreign officials more competent for the government of Ireland than they were then? No, if there has been any change it has been in the other direction. It has been in this, that our demand for Home Rule is stronger to-day than it was then. Why, in 1898 you gave a great system of free local government to the people, such as you have in England. You gave it with fear and trembling. Lord Salisbury had warned you that it was more dangerous to do that than to give Home Rule. Yet you granted it. What has been the result? Why, that the Irish people in the working of that Act have shown, untrained though they are in the arts of government, the steadiness, the sobriety, the moderation, and the good sense which are necessary for the successful work of governing themselves. I ask the Government where do they stand upon this question? Has their experience taught them nothing? Have they learned nothing from their experience of the last few years in the softening of class animosities, in the hope which they have often expressed, and which I am sure they share, of the early settlement of the land question, in the hope of the spread

of better feelings in Ireland, and of the possibility of meeting this natural demand of an intelligent people to be allowed to govern themselves—to govern themselves where you have shown your incapacity to govern them? Can we take Lord Dudley as representing the Government? Lord Dudley is an able man. He has made some most remarkable pronouncements in Ireland. Speaking on the 20th November 1902, he said:

“There were those who seemed to believe that the only way in which a great Empire could be successfully maintained was by suppressing the various distinguishing elements of its component parts—in fact, by running it as a huge regiment in which each nation was to lose its own individuality, and to be brought under a common system of discipline. That was not his view. In his opinion they were much more likely to break up an Empire by any such attempt. Lasting strength and loyalty were not to be secured by any attempt to force into one system or to mould into one type those special characteristics which were the outcome of a nation’s history, but rather by a full recognition of the fact that those very characteristics formed an essential part of the nation’s life, and that under wise guidance and sympathetic treatment they would enable her to play her own special part in the life of the Empire to which she belonged. It was upon that principle that he would proceed during his term of office, believing that any national development to be lasting or healthy must be spontaneous.”

Again he said:

“The opinion of the Government was, and it was his own opinion, that the only way to govern Ireland properly was to govern it according to Irish ideas instead of according to British ideas.”

What is the meaning of these words? In the ordinary acceptance of the meaning of language those words mean Home Rule, and they were so interpreted in Ireland. Were they that, or simply one more attempt by playing on words to deceive the people? Let me say for myself that I utterly decline to believe that, so far as Lord Dudley is personally concerned. But I am dealing, not with Lord Dudley, but with the Government policy in this matter. I ask, where do the Government stand upon this question? Our position is perfectly plain. We are a party of inde-

pendent opposition. We are in opposition to every Government that does not accede to our demand for legislative freedom. For myself, I have sat in opposition in this House for twenty-three years. I have taken part in the overthrow by Irish votes of Conservative Governments and of Liberal Governments. I know not, of course, what the future may have in store for us, but I have a pretty clear conception of what our duty is. In my judgment it is our duty to offer a vigorous and active opposition to the Government unless they show that they have made some appreciable advance on the road to Home Rule. My colleagues and I have been for many weary years travelling on a long and painful road. Many of us have grown old and grey through years of disappointment and disillusion. If we have to go on to our graves without success we will do so ungrudgingly, and bequeath this contest to our children. Let me say, however, for myself that I am fairly sanguine of the near future. I think I see in this country a widening of knowledge of Ireland, a growing appreciation of the real character of the Irish people and of the moderate nature of their demands, and therefore I decline to say one word or to give one vote which, in my opinion, is calculated to make it more difficult for any English party or any English Government to end this contest by some great measure of appeasement and justice, which, when it comes, believe me, will be as great a blessing to Great Britain as it will be to the long-suffering and faithful people of Ireland. Never forget that you can, by the mere concession of justice, convert Ireland in twenty-four hours into a friendly nation only too eager for what Gladstone called "the blessed oblivion of the past." But by the continuation of injustice you perpetuate a history of hatred and ill-will between two democracies who ought in God's providence to live side by side in amity and peace. It is for you to choose.

THE FINANCIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

Address delivered in the Mansion House, Dublin,
26th January 1905.

It is not my object to-night to enter into any argument on the proceedings of the Financial Relations Commission, or any defence of its verdict. That verdict stands, and although some English Ministers have declared that the inquiry was, in their judgment, not a sufficiently exhaustive one, and proposed to supplement it by a new Commission, they have not done so. We are, therefore, entitled to take that verdict as the basis of our claim that to-day Ireland is weighed down by a burden of unjust taxation which makes any real progress from poverty to prosperity an absolute impossibility for the nation at large, or for any single class of its population. It is well, perhaps, to recall the fact that the verdict of the commission admitted our claim that Ireland was entitled, under the Act of Union, that her taxation should be in accord with her taxable capacity as compared with that of Great Britain, and declared that Ireland's relative taxable capacity was not, in the opinion of any single member of the Commission, more than one-twentieth. The effect of this finding was that in the year ending 31st March 1894, when the total taxation of Ireland was £7,568,649, the Commission decided that at least $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions too much had been extracted from the country. Let me take that as my starting point and see what has happened since. The two broad facts which stand out, plain and indisputable, are that, since 1894, our population has gone down, and that our taxation has increased by leaps and bounds. During the fifty years preceding the Commission, the taxation per head of the population in Great Britain had been diminished by one half, and the taxation per head of the population

in Ireland had more than doubled. In the same period our population was reduced by four millions. Exactly the same process has gone on during the last ten years without any change. Since the finding of the commission there has been a steady decline in our population, which to-day is about 200,000 less than it was in 1894. During the same ten years our taxation has gone on steadily increasing. The total revenue from Ireland in 1893-4 was, as I have said, £7,568,649. In 1902-3 it had risen to £10,205,500. This year it was estimated by Mr Clancy, in his admirable speech on the last Budget, at £10,378,000, the highest figure yet reached. That is to say, since the verdict of the Commission the taxation of Ireland has increased, roughly speaking, by £3,000,000. This enormous increase has fallen on all classes in the community. The amount levied from income tax in Ireland has been doubled. The direct taxation has risen by about half a million. But the real hardship of the case is in the enormous rise of indirect taxation. These taxes fall upon the poor, and, hardest of all, on the very poor. In England the indirect taxes are only 50 per cent. of the whole revenue raised. It has been the policy of successive Chancellors and Governments for many years to bring down indirect taxation, and, if possible, to equalise direct and indirect taxation in Great Britain. He would be a very rash statesman who would venture to disturb this balance. But the policy has been quite different in Ireland. To-day it is 75 per cent. of the whole, which means that the great burden of the taxation of the country falls upon the most poverty-stricken class of the population. In 1893-4 the indirect taxes amounted to £5,267,775. In 1903-4 it had risen to £6,890,000. This enormous increase came entirely from increased taxes upon food, upon what are for the poor really necessities of life—tea, sugar, tobacco and meal. Now, what does Ireland get for this enormous taxation, or, in other words, what becomes of the money? The strangest thing about the whole business is that, so far as Great Britain or the Empire is concerned, Ireland is not such a profitable asset as one would suppose. By far the greatest part of Ireland's

enormous taxation is spent upon a recklessly extravagant and hopelessly insufficient system of government here. During the last ten years the cost of government has gone steadily up. In 1895 it cost £5,970,000 to run the Government of Ireland, leaving as an Imperial contribution from Ireland the balance of the total revenue of the country, amounting to £2,176,000. In 1902 the cost of Dublin Castle government had gone up from £5,970,000 to £7,214,000, and the Imperial contribution had risen by £200,000 or £300,000. There is no reason why the government of Ireland should cost more than half the present expenditure. The whole scale of expenditure is excessive. Law and police charges are just three times as great as in Scotland. Dublin Castle and all the Government Boards are run upon ridiculously extravagant lines. Belgium, with four times the trade of Ireland, and with a much larger population, is governed at about half the cost of the crazy and inefficient system supported here by our excessive taxation. And what a contrast! Belgium well governed, rich and contented. Ireland poor, naturally discontented, and so badly governed that Dublin Castle has become a by-word in the mouths of all men. We have recently heard a good deal about savings to be effected in Government Departments, and already something trifling is being done by reducing the police. But Ireland has not, and will not be, benefited. The savings are being captured by the Treasury to pay the bonus to the landlords, and all future savings are to be paid into the Development Fund, which has to bear all the losses on floating Stock for Land Purchase, and which Fund, if the Money Market remains as it is for a few years, will entirely disappear, transferring away from Ireland to the Treasury not only all saving that may be effected in Irish government, but also the Irish Equivalent Grant made in connection with the English Education Act, which ought to have been devoted to its legitimate purpose of extending and improving primary education as is badly needed in Ireland. The real truth is no proper saving can be made, or will be made, in the cost of Irish government which will be of any material

benefit to the nation until the present system of rule is absolutely swept away. When the present system of semi-independent, irresponsible, nominated Government Boards has disappeared, when the management of Irish affairs is placed in the hands of Irishmen, elected by the Irish people and responsible to Irish public opinion, when we cease to have young English "Shave-beggars," as O'Connell called them, sent over here to learn their first lessons in statesmanship by experimenting upon the body of our country, and when our annual Imperial contribution is fixed so as not to be liable at any moment to overwhelm us with ruin by reason of some Chamberlain of the future rushing the Empire into mad and guilty and unprofitable wars, then, and then only, in my opinion, will it be possible to really economise Irish expenditure with substantial benefit to the nation. What a cruel thing it is that while every industry and interest in the country is neglected, while education is starved, while the labourers can get no justice, while the artisans of the towns cannot get decent habitations, while the drainage of Irish rivers is neglected, while Irish railways are the worst and dearest in the world, and nothing is done to improve transit facilities, while the piers and harbours of the country are a disgrace and a danger to human life, and while all these things are so because of want of money—what a scandal and a crime it is that all the while we are supporting the most expensive government in the world and are paying from £3,000,000 to £5,000,000 a year more than our taxable capacity warrants as compared to Great Britain. Just think of how Ireland would be transformed if even a portion of this money of which we are annually robbed were spent under the paternal care of a native Government upon some of these matters I have mentioned, instead of being squandered as it is to-day. Take the case of the agricultural labourers. The justice and moderation of their claims are universally admitted. If they are not settled it is not because of any differences of opinion amongst political parties of various classes in Ireland. There is no such difference. It is far different from the Land question. No negotiations or

conferences are needed to compose conflicting interests and to enable Ireland to speak with one voice upon this matter. There are no conflicting interests and no opposing parties. Ireland has spoken, and to-day speaks with one voice upon it. Landlords and tenants and labourers, Unionists and Nationalists, are all agreed upon the essentials of a satisfactory settlement of the question. One thing only stands in the way—the want of money. The Treasury will not agree to undertake the possible loss which would be entailed by providing cheap money for the working of the Labourers Act. I suppose £10,000,000 would go a long way towards settling this question. But say even that £20,000,000 were needed. How easily we could meet the annual charge necessitated by raising and paying off such a capital sum out of the millions we are annually overtaxed. So also with the housing of the working class in towns. Mr Wyndham, in the Session of 1903, promised to introduce a Bill in the Session of 1904. He broke his promise. Why? Solely because he could not command the money necessary for an adequate scheme. Once more the Treasury blocked the way, and no effort whatever was made to provide decent and sanitary houses for the artisans and workmen of Irish towns, or to remove from Dublin and other cities the reproach of slums which are a disgrace to civilisation. I will not commit myself to any estimate of the capital sum required for a great scheme such as is necessary, but again I say, how easily it could be provided for out of our annually plundered millions. Englishmen are fond of protesting against being asked to endow a National University which Catholics could avail themselves of. Who has ever asked them for a penny? I suppose £50,000 or, allowing for proper building, £80,000 a year would give us such a University. We do not ask one penny of English money for the purpose. We only ask permission to use for this purpose an insignificant amount of our own money, which is annually extorted from us and wasted on useless, and worse than useless, expenditure, while the Irish nation is left hopelessly handicapped in its struggle for advancement, and even for existence, by its

youth being deprived of facilities for Higher Education. "No money," is the answer when we ask for any educational improvement, whether University or Primary, or for the betterment of the position of the National teachers. Mr Wyndham, speaking on 18th April 1904, said:

"They should spend another £100,000 a year on Primary Education, including the charges necessary to put the Irish schoolhouses into a sanitary condition up to anything like the standard that prevailed in England, and providing proper heating appliances. They should spend another £50,000 a year in co-ordination of Primary and Secondary Education, and another £25,000 a year on Technical Instruction."

£175,000 in all—but there was no money! "No money," is the answer when we ask for aid for the Denominational Training Colleges, which have been entirely built and equipped by private enterprise. "No money," is the answer when we ask for improvement in Industrial Schools. Last Session, when a small sum of £2000 a year was needed for Irish Day Industrial Schools, we were told that it should come out of the Development Fund, though in Scotland the charge is put on the ordinary Education Estimates. "No money," is the answer when we complain of being robbed of the Equivalent Grant for technical education. No money! Yet how easily education in all its branches, which is now stunted and starved, could be put on a level with the system of all the other countries in Europe, were the over-taxation of Ireland devoted to useful and profitable, instead of useless and wasteful expenditure. Take another subject, the question of arterial drainage. Our friends in Ulster are making sore complaints about the drainage of the Bann, and they are absolutely right. Ruin and desolation have been spread over a vast area, extending into five counties in Ulster, by the floodings of the Bann, and whole families have frequently been driven from their homes to seek shelter and safety on higher ground. Large areas are flooded to the depth of 2 ft. 6 in. for seven months of the year. The flooding of the Owenmore in Sligo lays waste thousands of acres, and 600 families are annually affected by it. The

Suck, which runs through Roscommon and Galway spreads ruin broadcast. The Barrow drains one of the largest areas drained by any Irish river. Its drainage area consists of 480,000 acres, and of these 46,000 acres are regularly flooded. Royal Commissions have sat upon the question and made reports, but all in vain. Great injury is done by the floodings of the Barrow, not merely to the lands, but to the towns of Athy, Monasterevan, Portarlinton, Mountmellick, and others, and the general health of the whole district is affected. The facts are indisputable, but the answer we get from successive Governments is always the same—No money! Belgium, where the cost of government is half that of Ireland, has spent £16,000,000 on drainage works in the last twenty-five years; but in Ireland, under British rule, though we are overtaxed millions every year, every demand for a great scheme of arterial drainage is met, as we were met last Session, when Mr Wyndham airily dismissed our claims in these words:

“He simply, as a member of His Majesty’s Government, said these schemes would cost a great deal of money, and of money they had none.”

On the 15th December last, addressing the Society of Civil Engineers of Ireland, Sir Antony M’Donell said:

“When he came back to his country, after many years’ absence, and when he looked, with that width and breadth of view which larger circumstances enabled him to take, he could see in Ireland a great future for the Civil Engineering profession, if only a chance were given them. He had had the curiosity of causing a map of Ireland to be prepared in accordance with the great watersheds of the rivers, and he could see what enormous advantages could be conferred upon their country if only the arterial drainage of Ireland could be treated upon a broad and systematic principle. Of course they had financial difficulties to contend with, and he was as sure as he could be of anything that if the distinguished officers of the distinguished department of the Board of Works had only three millions of pounds to deal with, they could convert the whole of Ireland into a district in which water-logging would no longer be possible, and the large advances which the Government were now making to land would be still better secured. On their

seaboard there were great opportunities for engineering enterprise. They had constantly complaints being made that our harbours were being silted up, and that piers were wanted where they were not found. If they had but a little more money to spend they could reap the harvest one-hundredfold more than they could now."

What a delightful piece of irony to speak of "the distinguished officers of the distinguished department of the Board of Works!"—a department usually run by young English gentlemen like Mr Wyndham's late secretary, Mr Hanson—a department "distinguished" only by the way it has bungled its work and wasted public money, and studded the whole coast with harbours which no ship can enter, and piers that have crumbled with the sea. Sir Antony M'Donell's estimate of £3,000,000 is probably very much under the mark. Mr Wyndham estimated the sum necessary at £20,000,000, but whether it be one or the other, how easy it would be to provide for payment of the annual interest and Sinking Fund necessary out of the millions which we are annually overtaxed, and which to-day are spent without any benefit to the country. At a meeting held in Arklow on the 18th of this month the following resolution was passed:

"That this public meeting, representing the County Councils, Corporations, Harbour Boards, Urban and Rural Councils of the Counties of Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford, view with alarm the condition of the fishing industry upon the south-east coast, an industry which is rapidly disappearing, owing to the inadequacy of the harbour accommodation along the coast, and the complete lack of interest taken in this most important question by successive Governments. And with a view to preventing the ruin of this industry, and the further emigration of our fishing population, now reduced by thousands within the past few years, we call on the Government to pass a Marine Works Act suitable to the conditions of our district, without further delay."

What is the answer of the Government? Once more—"No money!" The case of Arklow is a good sample of the work of "the distinguished officers of the distinguished Department of the Board of Works" in the past. In 1882 money was raised by way both of grant and loan to

improve the harbour. In spite of the protest of all the local public bodies, "the distinguished Department" insisted upon building a pier in a form which local opinion declared was wrong. The money was uselessly squandered. The harbour has filled up, and the town of Arklow is threatened with absolute ruin by the destruction of all its industries, and when we ask for a remedy we are told there is "No money!" In the whole history of the world there is no more cruel scandal than the system of which this is a sample. Let me take one more example. In my deliberate opinion the utterly defective condition of railway and transit facilities generally is the most serious of all the causes which keep Ireland in a state of chronic poverty. The rates of carriage in Ireland must be reduced fully 50 per cent. before profitable employment can be provided for the people of Ireland and emigration stopped. It is beyond dispute that nine-tenths of the ordinary agricultural products consumed in the English markets, and which are produced, or could be, in abundance in Ireland, are supplied by foreign producers, and the reason is perfectly clear. It is because in every country in Europe enormous decreases have been effected in rates of carriage, during the last twenty-five years, while in Ireland freights to-day are still monstrously and prohibitively high. I heard of a case the other day which, while it does not deal with foreign agricultural products, forcibly illustrates the absurdity of the present condition of transit in this country. Recently a woollen factory was established in the town of Galway. They get all the coal they require from England. But in the next county, in Arigna, in the County Roscommon, there is plenty of just the class of coal they require to be had at 8s. 6d. a ton, but the carriage from Arigna to Galway is 13s. 6d., which makes the price considerably more than that of the English coal. The question of Irish railways has been discussed by several Royal Commissions which have recommended nationalisation, State purchase, amalgamation, and other remedies, but which have never led to any practical result whatever. The Financial Relations Commission inquired closely into the subject. Mr Childers,

in his report, advocated, as one means of recouping Ireland for over-taxation, a compulsory reduction of 50 per cent. of the rates of carriage, with a guarantee by the State to protect the rights of the shareholders, and that the railways should be amalgamated under the control of a really strong and representative Irish Railway Commission. He went on to say:

“We think that in order to confer a substantial benefit on the Irish public and producer, and to give an effective stimulus to industry, the present rates and fares should be reduced by not less than one-half. We observe that the annual aggregate gross receipts of the Irish railways during the five years 1890-1894 has been £3,231,389, and the average net receipts £1,457,931. The amount of the annual payment which the suggested plan would in practice involve depends, of course, on the extent to which such a reduction of rates and fares would affect the gross and net receipts in view of the increase of business which would, in all probability, take place, and, *per contra*, the consequent increase of working expenses. We think, however, that there is good reason to believe that the amount of the annual payment required would be a diminishing quantity, and that every year a larger sum of money would be released, to be applied in other ways.”

For my part, I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that this question can only be satisfactorily settled by the nationalisation of Irish railways and waterways, and that until this is done no real or permanent improvement will be found for a great deal of the poverty of Ireland. We discussed this matter last session in Parliament, and once again Mr Wyndham admitted the grievance, admitted to the full its baneful effect upon every industry in Ireland, but then gave us the same answer—“No money.” He did not express dissent from the recommendation of the Financial Relations Commission. What he said was:

“The recommendation of the Royal Commission was outside the range of practical politics now. He would be giving encouragement to false hopes if he were to say any word that would lead hon. members to believe that he saw his way in the near future to an advance of £49,000,000 or £50,000,000 for the purchase of Irish railways, or that the State could enforce

and lay down a conventional rate lower than those now obtained, and recoup those who had invested in these companies by a practical guarantee."

Mr Childers had suggested this as a part set-off against the over-taxation of Ireland, but Mr Wyndham brushes the recommendation aside by simply saying, "No money." The annual payment which would be required to carry out Mr Childers's recommendation would not be large and could easily be met out of the millions annually robbed from us. There are two other subjects I would like to deal with did time permit: waste lands in Ireland, which are capable of reclamation for agriculture, and it is estimated that the cost of reclamation would be £6, 10s. per acre, or £9,750,000 in all. Reclamation of waste land in other European countries, which are, however, self-governed, has been carried out on far larger scales at a far greater cost. The Dutch Government drained Lake Haarlem, transforming it into 45,000 acres of meadow at a cost of £19 an acre, and they pumped out about half a million acres of the Zuyder Zee at a cost of £18 an acre, and I understand the work was so reproductive that they sold the land after reclamation at £34 an acre. Does anyone suppose that a National Government in Ireland would be less ready than the Dutch Government to undertake the far less heroic schemes of reclamation which would so greatly develop this country? The capital necessary for this work could easily be supplied out of the amount of our present over-taxation. One word also on the subject of forestry. Mr Howitz, the eminent Dutch Forest Conservator, who gave evidence before the Eardley-Wilmot Committee of the House of Commons in 1886, made a special report on Ireland, and declared that had the forests of Ireland been protected and fostered they would now represent the value of £100,000,000. In every other European country forests are regarded as a great national asset. In Ireland they have been ruthlessly destroyed. It has been estimated, on the basis of calculation by Mr Howitz and various experts, that there are 3,000,000 acres of land in Ireland which could be profitably planted, and it is calculated that

though such an operation would need an annual expenditure of a large sum for twenty-five years, that at the end of that time there would result an annual profit of about £3,000,000 a year. This operation also would be easy had Ireland at her disposal for works of national utility the millions which are now wrung from her every year, and expended without a thought of the well-being of the nation. You will have observed that I have said nothing at all about anything in the nature of restitution of the millions, the hundreds of millions robbed from us during the last hundred years, especially since 1853, in shameless violation of what Englishmen call the Treaty of the Union. I confine myself to the future, and I say the money annually raised by over-taxation, and which goes in the maintenance of a rotten, inefficient and demoralising system of government, which satisfies nobody but a handful of placemen, under which the population is diminishing and every industry languishing, would be amply sufficient, over and above the reasonable cost of civil government, to settle the labourers' question, the housing question in towns, every phase of the education question, the arterial drainage question, the question of harbour and pier accommodation, the great and vital question of general transit facilities, and the question of reclamation of waste lands and the re-forestation of Ireland. I calculate all these things could easily be provided for by about £3,000,000 a year or a little more; and allowing £5,000,000 a year for the government of Ireland, which is about what it cost in 1895, and which is far more than the cost of the government of Belgium, there would still remain over, out of our present taxation, £2,000,000 as an Imperial contribution from Ireland, which, of course, is far more than our fair proportion to the expenses of the Empire. Now, let me ask in conclusion: All that being so, what is the meaning of the apparent apathy on this question? What has become of the great agitation which was promised after the report of the Commission, in which we were told that at long-last Ireland would be united from the centre to the sea and would show what a united and determined Ireland could accomplish?

What has become of the speeches about the Volunteers of '82 and the Boston Tea Party? What has become of Lord Castletown and the O'Connor Don, and Colonel Saunderson? What has become of the Financial National Reform Association? They have all disappeared "like the baseless fabric of a vision," and left "not a rack behind." I am afraid we must accept the moral that we Nationalists must endeavour to work out a solution of this question for ourselves and on our own lines; and I hope what I have said to-night may have the effect of attracting anew the attention of priests and people to the most serious of all the wrongs of Ireland, save and except only the loss of our National freedom, of which it is the natural and inevitable consequence.

THE IRISH PROBLEM

House of Commons, 19th February 1906.

The following passage occurred in the Speech from the Throne, delivered at the opening of Parliament, 19th February 1906 :—

“ My Ministers have under consideration plans for improving and effecting economies in the system of government in Ireland, and for introducing into it means for associating the people with the conduct of Irish affairs. It is my desire that the government of the country, in reliance upon the ordinary law, should be carried on, so far as existing circumstances permit, in a spirit regardful of the wishes and sentiments of the Irish people, and I trust that this may conduce to the maintenance of tranquillity and of good feeling between the different classes in the community.”

MR SPEAKER, no one who is at all acquainted with the character or the history of the Irish question will, I think, be surprised if I seize the very earliest opportunity that is afforded me of bringing it before the attention of the present House of Commons. This is a new Parliament. As I understand, there are close upon three hundred new Members who have never heard the Irish question stated upon the floor of this House. The party whose *raison d'être* was opposition to the settlement of the Irish question on the basis of Self-government has been swept almost out of existence, and the party which has been publicly pledged for twenty years to a settlement of the question on the basis of Self-government has been returned by an overwhelming majority. Furthermore, this question of Ireland in the recent elections was in the very front of the issues which were submitted to the electors. [“ No, no,” from a Liberal Member.] Yes, it was placed before the electors in the speeches of the Prime Minister at Stirling and in the Albert Hall. But I do not dwell upon the point.

Although on that point my statement would be accurate even if I said nothing more, surely the question was placed before the electors in this country in the most dramatic and sensational way by the action of Lord Rosebery. Because Lord Rosebery declared that the Home Rule flag had been raised, that he refused to serve under that flag, and he forthwith disappeared from the controversy and the discussion connected with the General Election altogether. But it does not rest even there, because the late Prime Minister and Mr Chamberlain, and every one of the leading Ministers of the Crown, and I may say the same for all the Unionist candidates in Great Britain, put the question in the very forefront of the issues which they placed before the country. What did the late Prime Minister (Mr Balfour) say? On the very eve of the Manchester election he said: "I assert that Home Rule is the great dividing line between the two parties of the State. In spite of any assertions to the contrary I fail to see who is going to limit the power of the new Parliament in this matter, or how the Government is going to exclude Home Rule even in its largest form from the consideration of the House." Was that not placing Home Rule before the electors? And Mr Chamberlain on the 2nd January said: "I cannot understand how any of my friends could ever have supposed that the Prime Minister could come into power without standing by the programme to which he has given so emphatic an assent on so many previous occasions as a Home Ruler. I only say that because I want you to understand that Home Rule is raised in an effective manner in these elections." And it will be in the recollection of the House that he went further in one of his speeches and adopted as his own the phrase used by a newspaper in Ireland (which, I may say, was a paraphrase of one which he used in the elections of 1900, when he stated that every vote given for the Liberals was a vote given for the Boers), that "every vote given for Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman was a vote given for Home Rule." Mr Gerald Balfour, in his election address, said: "The two main questions at issue were Home Rule and Fiscal Reform." And the *London Times*,

the day before the Manchester election, said: "There can be no shadow of a question that Home Rule is one of the issues of the General Election of 1906."

I start therefore from the fact, that not only is the party which has been openly pledged to Home Rule for twenty years now in power, but from the fact that that issue was placed, no matter whether any individual desired it or not, by the Prime Minister, by Lord Rosebery, by the late Prime Minister, by Mr Chamberlain and the whole Unionist party before the electors, and the result was that the party pledged to Home Rule has come back into power with an unprecedented majority. Therefore I respectfully say that it is right and proper that at the earliest possible moment this question should be raised.

Now, what is the Irish question? I say that it is the greatest of all Imperial questions which can concern, which can command, or ought to command, the attention of English statesmen. It is the most urgent of all Imperial questions. The present condition of Ireland is the greatest disgrace of this Empire; it is of the greatest danger to this Empire; it is the greatest obstacle to the efficiency of this Parliament—ay, and let me say to you English Members on the other side, who have come here filled with enthusiasm for English reforms, it is the greatest block in the way of those great social reforms for this country which are needed by the people. It means the existence at your doors here, at the very heart of your Empire, of an Ireland poverty-stricken and disaffected. Does anyone doubt that? And does anyone who recognises that fact doubt its meaning or minimise its consequences?

Judged by every test that the wit of man can devise, the government of Ireland by this country, under the Act of Union, has been a failure. I desire briefly to place this case before the House of Commons, and you will allow me, therefore, to consider some of these great tests. What greater test of good government and progress in a country is to be found than the test of population? You are proud of the fact that all over the Empire population

has increased. In Ireland it has declined, and is still declining. Listen to the figures: Since 1841 the population of Ireland has diminished by fifty per cent. In 1845 Ireland had three times as many people as Scotland, and half as many as England—Ireland, in fact, had one-third of the whole population of the United Kingdom; but in sixty years the population of Ireland had gone down by 4,000,000. Is there in the whole world a parallel to that awful tragedy? We in Ireland have emerged within the last few weeks—I hope for ever—from what Lord Salisbury called twenty years of resolute government. In those twenty years the population of Ireland went down by almost 1,000,000. And what was the character of the emigration? Sir, that is a greater tragedy still. Ninety per cent. of those who have emigrated from Ireland have been between the ages of ten and forty-five. That means that it is those who are in the prime of life who are leaving the country, and accounts for the fact which English tourists always notice—that there are more little children and more old men and women to be seen in Ireland than in any country in Europe. And of the ninety per cent., how many of them remain in Europe at all? Every man who emigrates from Ireland is lost, not only to Ireland but to the Empire; eighty-seven per cent. of the whole emigration from Ireland goes to the United States—that is to say, young men and young women, physically and mentally vigorous, not only are lost to Ireland, but are lost to the Empire, and constitute a power in America, as everyone acquainted with the circumstances knows, which is a danger to this country, and which most undoubtedly is the chief barrier in the way of a permanent amicable understanding between America and England.

Those who have followed closely the progress of the Irish movement in recent years have no doubt read with interest the remarkable pamphlets and speeches of Lord Dunraven. He was a great Irish landlord. He has been all his life, and is to-day, a Unionist. He openly declares himself a Unionist, and I commend his statement upon this

question of the decay of Ireland. It is not prompted by partisanship, as statements of ours might be said to be. It is a statement wrung from a Unionist by the hard facts of the case. Take another test than population. In one of his pamphlets Lord Dunraven deals with this test, and it is an awful condemnation of your rule in Ireland. Lunacy in Ireland is steadily increasing. To-day, out of every 10,000 of the population 52·6 are lunatics or imbecile. In Scotland and Wales the proportion is only 34·7. Lunacy in Ireland has more than doubled since 1851. Think what that means! It is true that under your rule it has been the survival of the unfittest in Ireland. All the young people mentally and physically strong go away, and the mentally and physically weak, and the old and the decrepit, remain behind, and you have the awful result in the increase of lunacy. Then take the birth-rate. It is the lowest in Europe. The birth-rate is 23·5 per 1000. In England it is 31·7, in Scotland, 31·7, and Lord Dunraven in one of his pamphlets states that in various European countries, including Hungary, Belgium, Roumania, Austria, Prussia, Italy, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland, the birth-rate is far higher than in Ireland. Then there is another test of an equally tragic character. The serious forms of disease are spreading in Ireland with alarming rapidity—diseases such as consumption, cancer, and other horrible plagues of humanity are spreading with rapidity. In other countries they are diminishing. I attribute these facts to the insanitary conditions in which most of the Irish people live, and to the poor and unwholesome food which alone they are able to obtain. And take pauperism. One person out of every 100 in Ireland is an inmate of the workhouse, and one out of every forty-four, including those receiving out-door relief, keep body and soul together by rate aid. From 1863 to 1903 the number of paupers per 1000 of the population in Ireland has doubled. During the same period the proportion of paupers in England has been diminished by one-half. Do English Members, especially those who represent great centres of industry, ever reflect for a moment how this

Irish poverty re-acts upon their country and their constituents? Why, you passed with a great flourish of trumpets last year an Aliens Bill to save the British workmen from competition of the alien labourer. I would like to ask English Members of great centres of industry how much the want of employment was due to the competition of the Irish labourer. The only way you can save yourselves from this competition is by making Ireland a country where men can live and thrive and find work; and in that way alone, and not by your Alien Emigration Laws, will you be enabled to deal effectively, in the case of these great centres, with the problem of the unemployed.

Now, I ask, is that not an awful picture which is presented? Here you have what is admittedly a fertile country, because, although a good deal of Ireland is poor soil, taking it all round, as a whole, it is blessed with a mild climate and a fertile soil. Here you have a race of men proved by the history of the world to be brave and able. Go, as I have done, through the world and see the industry and ability of the men of our race. In every country but their own the Irish race have been industrially successful, have risen to the highest positions, and have shown themselves well fitted for the arts of government and of industry. How is it that in their own country alone they are afflicted with these causes which make Ireland almost a desert? We find the population flying from it as if from a plague-stricken land, lunacy increasing, deadly disease spreading, the birth-rate the lowest in the world, and pauperism doubled in forty years; and yet, Mr Speaker, that is not one-half the picture.

We are blessed with—rather, I ought to say, cursed in Ireland—the costliest government in the whole world. The cost of the civil government per head of the people in Ireland is just double what it is in England. The total civil government for Scotland last year cost £2,477,000; for Ireland in the same year, with the same population, the charge was £4,547,000. Ireland's judicial system costs £200,000 a year more than the Scotch. The Irish police costs exactly three times what the police of Scotland

costs, although the population is the same, and the amount of crime in Ireland is less. Upon this question of finance allow me to recall to the memory of the House that ten years ago a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the financial relations between the two countries—Great Britain and Ireland. That was not an Irish Commission. It had a British majority upon it. It contained some of the greatest financial experts of this country. It examined as witnesses all your greatest authorities on finance; and that Commission reported ten years ago that Ireland, according to comparative taxable capacity, was being taxed three millions a year too much. We asked for redress, and in this matter we were fortunate enough to have the support of Colonel Saunderson and the Ulster Unionist members, or most of them. We also had the valuable support of the late Mr Lecky; and I am glad to record the fact with gratitude that the right hon. gentleman, the member for the City of London (Sir E. Clarke)—who, I am sure, will not grudge me the little gratification of saying I welcome his return to this House, because, among other reasons, I heartily respect the motives that drove him out of the House, namely, his opposition to the Boer war—we had his support and the support of certain other independent English Members of the House. But we have waited ten years for redress and none has come. Redress! Why, it is not only that we have had no redress, but since that report three millions a year additional taxation has been placed upon Ireland. In fifty years, Mr Speaker, the taxes per head of the population has doubled. That is to say, as the population has gone down, as the industrial prospects of the country have declined, as poverty, and misery, and disease and lunacy have been spreading over Ireland, the taxes of Ireland have been doubled, while during the same fifty years in this country, with its expanding prosperity and increasing population, the taxes per head of the population have been diminished just by one-half.

The right hon. gentleman, the Member for West Birmingham, in his short references to Ireland—I wish they

had been longer—in his remarkable speech earlier in the evening spoke about the Irish people as if they had as full voice as any Englishman or Scotchman in the government of their own affairs. In the expenditure of the enormous sums raised in Imperial taxation in Ireland, which have now reached ten millions a year, the Irish people have no voice at all. It is idle to tell me that they have representation in this House. Every old Member of the House knows what happens about Supply. One of the blessings of the Tory rule of the House of Commons has been that what was always regarded as the first and most essential duty of this House—namely, the discussion of Supply—has almost disappeared. Under the new rules we are supposed to get three days in the Session—three sittings of the House in the Session—for the discussion of Irish Supply. Three days for the discussion of forty or fifty boards and ten millions of money. Why, the result has been, Mr Speaker, for very many years past that nine-tenths of this enormous sum of money raised for the government of Ireland has been passed by the closure without one single word of discussion by Irish Members.

And for this enormous taxation, what do we get in Ireland? I say we have the worst and, to use Lord Rosebery's word, the most inefficient government in the whole world. Lord Dunraven in one of his speeches said: "We are governed as no other people in the world are governed. It is difficult to understand what that which is called Castle government really means. It was not democratic, it was not despotic, it was not an oligarchy. Nobody who ruled had any control over these Irish Boards. No one could say that such a form of government was suitable to the needs of the country or the age in which we live." And Lord Lansdowne, in the House of Lords, not very many months ago, used the remarkable phrase: "There is room for considerable improvement in the old-fashioned and complicated organisation of Irish government." And Sir West Ridgeway? Let me pause for a moment to remind the House who he is. He was Under Secretary in Dublin Castle when the late Prime Minister was Chief Secretary;

and he has told us, in a remarkable declaration, that at the very time when he was engaged in carrying out a Coercion *régime* in Ireland he was at the same time engaged in preparing a great scheme of Local Government—not County Councils—but proposing a scheme of Devolution or a National Council, or something of that kind, and he has told us this—that Dublin Castle government is “a chaotic anachronism.” The same is true of Sir Robert Hamilton, Sir Redvers Buller, of Lord Dudley, and, not to go back further, of Lord Carnarvon. I will not quote the Liberal statesmen, whose views are well known. I wish I had by me at the moment—I am almost afraid it is gone out of print, and the Irish National party will have to reprint it—the Radical Programme. I have it at home, and I am very familiar with it, and I directly controvert the statement of the right hon. gentleman, Mr Chamberlain, to the effect that his scheme of reform in Ireland was such as is now satisfied by the concession of Local Government. Nothing of the kind. His scheme was a scheme for the abolition of Dublin Castle government. It was a scheme not only for giving County Councils, but it was a scheme for putting into the hands of some great representative body all great Irish questions, including, if I am not mistaken, the greatest of all controversial questions in Ireland, the Land and Education.

Now, Mr Speaker, the result of all this was inevitable. The result has been the neglect of every Irish industry, and the dissatisfaction and discontent of every class of the community in Ireland. I say every interest has been neglected. Our fisheries are neglected, our great waterways are neglected, our system of transit and railway facilities are the most expensive in Europe. Our harbours are neglected, and our system of education is fifty years behind that of the least progressive country in Europe—education in all its branches, primary, secondary and University; and our working classes are worse housed, and less effort is made to improve their lot than the same class in any country in the world. It follows as a matter of course that every class in Ireland is dissatisfied—land-

lords, tenants and labourers, the artisans in the towns, the shopkeepers, the merchants, and the professional classes. There is no class in the community that is not profoundly dissatisfied with the present system of government. And what is the latest proof we have of that? Why, the Orange democracy in Belfast has proved its dissatisfaction in the most sensational way, when they returned by Orange votes to this House my honourable friend (Mr J. Devlin). In a remarkable speech made not very long ago, Lord Rosebery declared that he would be prepared to give a Colonial Constitution to Ireland if Ireland were only loyal. I ask the House of Commons what race of men who are not both fools and slaves would be loyal to such a system of government as I have outlined? The remark which I have quoted was a thoughtless remark, and indeed, I think, a heartless one. It showed a strange forgetfulness for the moment of the history of the Empire. Sir, the history of the Empire, if it proves anything, proves this, that loyalty has been the result, and not the forerunner, of the concession of self-government. Where you have given self-government there you have loyalty; where you withheld self-government, there you have had disaffection and disaster. Let me ask, Are the Irish to-day less loyal than were the Canadians, to whom you gave Home Rule when they were rebels with arms in their hands fighting upon the field of battle? Are the Irish less loyal than the Boers, who, the other day, were under arms against the English power, and to whom now—and I thank God for it—you are about to give responsible government? Don't you know, every man who is acquainted with the Colonies, that the Colonies of Australia would not be loyal for twenty-four hours if you attempted to govern them from Westminster or from Downing Street? If you have any doubt upon this, ask the Colonial Premiers.

There is nothing more remarkable than the fact that every self-governing colony in the Empire has declared openly through its Parliament in favour of Home Rule for Ireland! The last is the declaration to be found in the petition to the King adopted by the Commonwealth Par-

liament of Australia. This is what they say: "The sad history of Ireland since the Act of Union shows that no British Parliament can understand or effectively deal with the economic and social conditions of that country. Enjoying as we do the blessings of Home Rule here, we would humbly express the hope that a just measure of Home Rule may be granted to the people of Ireland. They ask for it through their representatives. Never has a request been more clear, consistent and continuous. As subjects of your Majesty we are interested in the peace and contentment of the various parts of the Empire, and we desire to see this long-standing grievance at the very heart of the Empire removed." That was supported by the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and the Leader of the Opposition, who opposed it and voted against it, declared in his speech that he did so, not that he was against the concession of Home Rule for Ireland, but he thought it unwise for Australia to interfere. I say, ask the opinion of the Colonial Premiers when the Colonial Conference meets. If you want to put a subject before them that is certain to meet with unanimity and with enthusiasm, put before them this question of Self-government for Ireland and you will get a unanimous and enthusiastic declaration in its favour.

Now, Mr Speaker, this is a very brief and imperfect outline of the problem of Ireland. I say to you, it is a problem that won't brook delay. Ireland is now peaceful; there is no political disorder or crime of any sort or kind in the country. One of the most fatal characteristics of English concessions to Ireland in the past has been that concessions have nearly always been given, I won't say in consequence of unrest and violence, but certainly following such periods. I respectfully say that English politicians who would say that because Ireland is peaceful, because there is no political turmoil and crime in the country, that therefore this problem can wait, would be incurring a risk and responsibility from which any man of sense should shrink. Sir, the King's Speech alludes to Ireland. Let me first say I deeply regret there is no statement in that

speech with reference to the Land Question—that there is no declaration by the Government that they intend to deal with it. I must not be unjust, and therefore I acknowledge freely that the Government, by their administration of the Act, have done a great deal already since they came into office upon this question. They have most undoubtedly freed the hands of the Commissioners, and by tearing up the regulations which are associated with the names of Mr Wyndham and Mr Long, they undoubtedly have put it into the power of the Commissioner to go a long way in settling some of the worst features of the Irish Land Question; and I look forward with great hope to the speedy settlement of the greater portion, at anyrate, of the question of the evicted tenants. But, Mr Speaker, no one who understands Ireland and the working of this Act can doubt that serious amendments in other respects—amendments which can only be carried by legislation—are necessary. This Act was not, as I saw it recently well said, an Act passed merely for the purposes of enabling one class of people to transfer their property in land to another. I don't suppose the English nation would for a moment have accepted the Bill of 1903 if that was its only object. No, Sir, the object of the measure was to settle the Irish Land Question, to remove from Ireland that perennial source of misery and struggle between the people of Ireland, and that object, in my judgment, can never be achieved by this Act, unless in certain directions the element of compulsion is applied. I regret, therefore, that there is no indication of the intention of the Government to propose an amendment of this Act. It will be our duty to press that consideration upon the Government, and I think the experience and pressure of events will bear in upon them that they must introduce legislation for this purpose, and speedily.

Now, let me say one word upon the question of the Coercion Act. Sir, the Speech from the Throne declares that Ireland is to be governed by the ordinary law, and I freely admit the Government have withdrawn by proclamation any portions of the Coercion Act which have

been kept in force. I listened with great interest to the Prime Minister upon this point, and I gathered from him—he will correct me if I am wrong—that it was the intention and policy of the Government to introduce a measure—he safeguarded himself so far as this Session is concerned—to introduce a measure for the removal of the Coercion Act from the Statute Book.

The PRIME MINISTER: Hear, hear.

Mr JOHN REDMOND: Yes, I have accurately interpreted the right hon. gentleman. He could not take up any other attitude, because when that Bill was passing through the House of Commons the Liberal party fought it tooth and nail in every clause and almost every word. The whole Liberal party have voted in favour of its immediate repeal, and I well remember last session, when the hon. Member for North Kildare, Mr John O'Connor, moved a motion in this House, declaring that the Coercion Act was an insult to Ireland, and should be immediately repealed, the whole Liberal party were led into the lobby in support of that motion by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Asquith), who made upon that occasion one of his most eloquent and vehement speeches, protesting that the Act was a disgrace to the country and should be removed from the Statute Book. All I say is, that the Government, having expressed their intention in the King's Speech of governing Ireland by the ordinary law, should, before this session is over, introduce a measure for its repeal. It is a measure that would not occupy much time in its Committee stage, and would not make any great inroad on the time of the Government; and as to the fate that might meet it in the other House, I say respectfully that that ought not to deter the Government from introducing a measure to which they are so completely pledged, and in favour of which they have so vehemently argued.

Now, Sir, with reference to the general statement in the King's Speech about Ireland. I admit the criticism of the right hon. gentleman, Mr Chamberlain. The words are vague. I would have been pleased if they were not

vague. If the honour had been conferred upon me of allowing me to draft these words, I would have drafted them differently from what they are. They may mean a little and they may mean a great deal, but the fact that they are vague throws upon me, as I conceive it, the duty of reiterating in this House once again the position of the Irish party upon this question of National Self-government. Our attitude has not changed by one hair's breadth during the past twenty-five years. We have been sent to this House, and come here year after year, not to obtain little bits of amelioration for the lot of the Irish people in this particular or that. We have taken all that came our way, not merely because these things seemed to us good in themselves, but because we believed that everything which tended to make prosperous the lot of the people in Ireland and to alleviate the condition of the people was a strengthening of their political power to obtain National Self-government in the end. We did not come for the purpose of obtaining these things; we came here to obtain the freedom of our country. And, Mr Speaker, we are to-day of the same opinion that we always were, that the Irish Question can never be satisfactorily or finally settled except by the concession to Ireland of a Parliament and an Executive responsible to it. I feel bound to make that declaration under the peculiar circumstances of the case. At the same time I desire to say this, that we will give every encouragement to the Government in any efforts of theirs to deal with this question. In dealing with it they will find in us reasonable and practical men. They will find in us men who have spent twenty-five years of our lives in endeavouring to win this right for our country—men who don't want to die until they see some great advance made along the road; and therefore men who will not wantonly or perversely alienate the sympathy or support of any man or body of men who believe in the principle of settling the Irish Question on the basis of Self-government. I have been blamed, and my colleagues have been blamed, by some of our friends in Ireland, and outside Ireland, because we made no bargain with the

Prime Minister before the elections. The right hon. gentleman, in one of his election speeches, denied that there was any bargain entered into between him and me on behalf of the Irish Members, and, of course, he was strictly accurate. There was no bargain. There could be no bargain on our part except on the basis of the immediate concession, as the first measure of this session of Parliament, of a full measure of Home Rule for Ireland. There could be no bargain except on the basis of an alliance between our party and the Liberal party, which would mean, in fact, a merging of forces with those of the Prime Minister's. I, for one, have always held the view that a position of independence for the Irish party is better for the Liberal party and better for the Irish party. Hence it is that no bargain was entered into or sought by the right hon. gentleman or us. Then our critics say, "If you had no bargain with the Government why did you assist them on the floor of this House, and afterwards in the country, in rejecting the late Government?" Well, Sir, political memories are very short; but my mind goes back to that famous meeting in August 1901, when the right hon. gentleman (Mr Chamberlain) and the late Prime Minister went down to Blenheim and declared open war upon the Irish party and the Irish cause. Sir, they then had at their backs a majority of close upon one hundred and fifty. People were wont to speak of it as the strongest Government of modern times; and those two right hon. gentlemen went down to Blenheim and declared that this enormous power was to be used for the purpose of diminishing the influence and of muzzling the Irish Members upon the floor of the House of Commons by new rules, and for the purpose of robbing Ireland of a certain number of those Members who were guaranteed to her by the Act of Union. Well, we all remember what happened. They did introduce new rules into the House, and thereby they interfered very seriously with the dignity, efficiency and privileges of the House of Commons—and incidentally I may say I hope the Government will deal with that subject before very long; but the moment the Tory

Government came to the punitive portion of their rules their effort broke down, and their new rules were never fully considered at all. The first punitive rule remains to this moment in an unfinished condition—a monument of their failure to muzzle the Irish party. I ask, therefore, what has become of their threat to muzzle us on the floor of the House of Commons? Where is their scheme to rob Ireland of thirty seats? Where is their majority of one hundred and fifty? Where is their party? Where is their leader? They have all disappeared, and the Irish party is here as numerous and as powerful as ever.

The late Government pledged themselves, in the most solemn way that any Government was ever pledged, to introduce a satisfactory Bill dealing with the labourers in Ireland. They broke that pledge. They introduced a worthless Labourers Bill. They reimposed the Coercion Act in Ireland. Having passed the Land Bill of 1903 with unanimity of all parties, they immediately proceeded by secret instructions, and otherwise by methods of administration, to block its fair and useful operation. And I say here to-day, that even if I believed last year or the year before that Ireland could gain nothing from the Liberal Government and party—and I did not believe that—even if I believed that the Prime Minister was going, after his honourable and consistent record on the Irish Question of twenty years, to prove false to Ireland—which I was far from believing; even if I believed these things, I would have felt it my duty and the duty of my colleagues to do all that we could—and I think we worked fairly effectively on the floor of this House, and afterwards in the country—to drive the last Government from office.

Now, Sir, the present Government, as I have pointed out, have a great and unparalleled opportunity. One result stands out above all else, perhaps, in this election. Home Rule is no longer a bogey to frighten the English Liberals. All the raw-head-and-bloody-bones business is played out. The Member for West Birmingham (Mr Chamberlain) waxed indignant at the circulation of some cartoons on Chinese labour, which he thought unfair and

untrue. What about the cartoons that he and his friends circulated about Ireland, which they posted on all the dead walls in England, depicting Irishmen as almost inhuman brutes, murdering women and children? Let me give an instance of the kind of political literature—I am not sure it is not a gross personal libel as well—which some of them circulated during the General Election. The hon. and gallant Member for the division of Evesham (Colonel Long) issued an autograph letter to the electors, and in the course of that autograph letter he used those words: “If Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is returned to office Mr Redmond will bring pressure to bear upon him and his Government by the murder of loyal citizens and the mutilation of cattle.”

(Loud and indignant cries of “Oh” from the Ministerial and Irish benches.)

The indignation of the right hon. gentleman (Mr Chamberlain) because there was a picture of two Chinamen with their hands tied behind their backs seems to me ludicrous and insincere when he and the men who profess to share that indignation are guilty of conduct such as that.

No, thank God, Home Rule is no longer a bogey to the English elector. We have been told by some people that the predominant partner must be converted. Well, the predominant partner by an overwhelming majority has, at anyrate, returned to office a Government which is pledged, and has been pledged for twenty years, to the principle of Self-government in Ireland; and I am convinced that the public opinion of this country is to-day perfectly prepared for some great reconstructive policy on the question of Irish Government. The Liberal Government to-day, therefore, has an enormous majority and enormous power. Difficulties in their path on this question have melted away. Many of them have been removed by the act of the Unionist party, and I beg of the Government to recognise the urgency of this question, and not to delay in their intention to deal with it.

I notice with satisfaction that the King's Speech says that plans—a very definite expression—are under con-

sideration for the purpose of dealing with this question. I beg that the final consideration of these plans be not postponed, and I beg of the Government in preparing those plans not to be half-hearted or timid. In the last session of the old Parliament I moved an amendment to the Address in the following terms: "We humbly represent to your Majesty that the present system of government in Ireland is in opposition to the will of the Irish people, and gives them no voice in the management of their own affairs; that the system is consequently inefficient and extravagantly costly; that it does not enjoy the confidence of any section of the population; that it is productive of universal discontent and unrest, and is incapable of satisfactorily promoting the material and intellectual progress of the people." Sir, that amendment was supported by the entire Liberal party. If I speak of sections of the Liberal party I am sure no honourable gentleman opposite will think I use the phrase in an invidious or offensive sense. I do so because the public talk of sections; and I say that this declaration was supported by all so-called sections of the Liberal party, by every man who now sits on the Treasury bench, without exception. Therefore, that statement is no longer a statement of mine or a statement of the Irish party. It is the declaration of the Liberal party. That is your own declaration, and that declaration proves at one and the same time the grave character and the urgent character of this problem. I beg of you, when you come to deal with it, to have the courage of your convictions, and to deal with it boldly.

Sir, in conclusion, one word more—one only. Once again Ireland has lifted her head—that head so long bowed in sorrow and almost in despair. Once again the hope of a better day, of a coming day of justice, of liberty, and at least of comparative prosperity is pulsing through her veins. God grant, for her sake, but equally for yours, that that hope be not disappointed.

ENGLISH GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND

House of Commons, 12th February 1907.

At the opening of Parliament, 12th February 1907, the Speech from the Throne contained the following reference to Ireland :

“ Your attention will be called to measures for further associating the people of Ireland with the management of their domestic affairs, and for otherwise improving the system of government in its administrative and financial aspects.”

“ Proposals will also be submitted for effecting a reform of University Education in Ireland, whereby I trust that the difficulties which have so long retarded the development of higher education in that country may be removed.”

In the discussion which followed Mr Redmond spoke as follows :

MR SPEAKER, the references to Ireland in the Speech from the Throne, the certainty that this will be largely an Irish session, and the fact that the Government are about to deal with the question of Irish government, make it, I think, desirable that I should intervene at the earliest stage in this debate.

And, first, I desire to state to the House what I and my colleagues understand to be the position of the Government on this question. We regard them as absolutely pledged to deal with this question this session, and to deal with it on lines leading to national Self-government. Now, I do not want to go into the method that they will adopt. No doubt their plan is still under consideration, and I do not know what form that plan will ultimately take; but I think it is desirable that I should here repeat, although some hon. Members may be tired of the repetition, that we on these benches stand in exactly the same position that we have occupied for over twenty-five years. We believe that

nothing can settle this question, and nothing bring content, peace and prosperity to Ireland, short of a Parliament in Ireland, with an executive responsible to it. I gather with the greatest pleasure from the words of the right hon. gentleman himself that he (the Prime Minister) is still of the opinion—I never doubted it—that he always entertained, and that his opinion about the ultimate solution of this question is precisely the same as mine.*

I pass, therefore, from the question of method, which I do not think I could usefully discuss at the present moment, by saying that the whole of the present Government are absolutely pledged to deal with this question, that they have unanimously condemned, root and branch, the present system of government in Ireland, and that they have pledged themselves to abolish it. In the session of 1905 every member of the present Government then in the House of Commons, and the entire Liberal party, voted in favour of a motion that declared “that the present system of government in Ireland is in opposition to the will of the Irish people, and gives them no voice in the management of their own affairs; that the system is consequently inefficient and extravagantly costly; that it does not enjoy the confidence of any section of the population; that it is productive of universal discontent and unrest, and is incapable of satisfactorily promoting the material and intellectual progress of the people.” That then is the problem that the Government have announced that they are about to deal with this session; and inasmuch as the proposed method is still under consideration it

* The Prime Minister, preceding Mr Redmond in the debate, had said: “My view has been made as clear as day again and again in and out of the House. The whole point is this—Are you prepared to deny that the Irish people are entitled to manage their own domestic affairs so long as they do not interfere with ours and so long as nothing is done to infringe the supremacy of Parliament, and therefore the solidity of the connection between the three countries? It does not make any difference whatever in the solidity of the Empire that the Irish people should have what every self-governing colony has—the power of managing their own affairs. That is the larger policy of which I have spoken. What I desire—although it may not be possible or desirable to do it all at once—is this: Let us remove the more obviously objectionable features in the present system, and let us do it in such a way as to be consistent with the adoption of that larger policy. I do not think I need say more.”

may be advisable for me, even if I do make some demands upon the patience of the House, to ask the House to look a little more closely into the main facts of this problem.

Now, all those who took up the position adopted by the Government in 1905, and voted for my resolution, start from the position that English rule in Ireland for the past hundred years has been a failure. Let me recall some of the facts:—In the last sixty-five years the population of Ireland has fallen from over 8,000,000 inhabitants to a little over 4,000,000, and in the last twenty-five years her population has fallen by nearly 1,000,000. That is an extraordinary state of things. There is nothing like it to be found in the rest of the world. These sixty-five years have been for the rest of Europe years of great prosperity. The increase of knowledge, the enormous advance of science, have led to a vast impetus of trade, wealth has increased, population has increased, and trade and commerce have greatly prospered. To this Ireland is the sole exception. Ireland to-day is without manufactures; the wages are miserable in the extreme. Let the House hear the figures. The average rate of wages for able-bodied male adults employed in agriculture in the year 1902 is stated to have been 17s. 5d. in England, 17s. 7d. in Wales, 19s. 5d. in Scotland, and 10s. 9d. in Ireland. Again, the highest average weekly earnings in England were (in the county of Durham) 22s. 2d., in Wales (in Glamorgan) 21s. 3d., in Scotland (in Renfrew and Lanark) 22s. 2d., in Ireland (in Down) 13s. Once more the lowest average weekly earnings in England were (in Oxfordshire) 14s. 6d., in Wales (in Cardiganshire) 15s. 8d., in Scotland (in Shetlands, Orkney and Caithness) 13s. 7d., in Ireland (in Mayo) 8s. 9d. During these sixty-five years lunacy has increased, and is increasing. Serious disease is increasing. Pauperism, since 1863, has doubled, though in the same period in England it has been diminished by one-half. The people are still flying from the country, and those who remain are sullen, apathetic and intensely disaffected to your rule.

During all these years Ireland has had no effective voice whatever in the management of Irish affairs. In the

House of Commons Ireland has about one-sixth of the representation. We all know that during the greater portion of the century the representatives of the Irish nation were overborne by the English and Scotch members. In the House of Lords we had no representation at all; and therefore the responsibility for the present condition of affairs rests upon Great Britain. Great Britain has had complete power; Great Britain has done just as she pleased with the government of Ireland, and, as a result, you have before you the ghastly failure and tragedy of to-day. What is the cause of all this? I do not—I never have—attributed it to any malice on the part of the English people. There was a time, I know, when there was a great deal of prejudice against Ireland, but so far as the masses of the English people are concerned I do not say that the misgovernment of Ireland has been due to malice. It is due to the perfectly natural ignorance of the people of this country with regard to Irish affairs. It is due to the perfectly natural indifference to Irish matters of a people who have more than enough to engage all their energies and their attentions with their own affairs.

It is due largely to the want of time on the part of this assembly, which has been vainly trying for over a hundred years to transact in one Chamber the work which ought to be divided amongst several assemblies. It is due to selfishness, to that kind of selfishness which induced England, when she found that Free Trade was an admirable thing for her, not to hesitate to consider whether it was a good thing for Ireland; to selfishness of the kind which induced her when, in 1853, a re-arrangement of the liquor duties was considered good for England, not to stop for one instant to think what it meant for Ireland, when, as a matter of fact, coming on Ireland immediately after she was exhausted by the great famine, it was a staggering blow, and inflicted upon her £2,000,000 a year of additional taxation. The system which you have maintained, and which you are now pledged to abolish, has been an impossible one from the first. I am amused when I read of so-called Unionist orators denouncing the idea of creating what is

called a separate Government for Ireland. There is, and there has been for a century, a separate Government for Ireland; but it has been a separate Government of so monstrous, inefficient, irresponsible and costly a character as to be without parallel in the whole history of the nations of the world.

This Government consists of a series of Bureaus, each independent of the other, and most of them absolutely irresponsible. Lord Dunraven declared a couple of years ago that there were forty-one of these Boards, and he was challenged to produce his evidence. I have here in my hands a list of sixty-seven of these Boards, Departments and Offices. In the civil government of Ireland there are these sixty-seven Boards, Offices and Departments. Some of these Boards are responsible solely to the British Government; some of these Boards are local branches of English Boards and English Departments, responsible to the head officials on this side of the water; some of them are responsible in theory to the Chief Secretary. I think I can imagine what the feelings of the right hon. gentleman, the new Chief Secretary, must have been for the first week or two he was in office on finding every morning he awoke that he was President of a new Department, a new Board which he had never heard of before, whose officials he had never met, whose work he had no conception of, and for whom he is supposed in theory to be responsible to this House as Chief Secretary. I think there are about a score of those Boards. No man living could in reality make himself responsible for the work of these Boards. These Boards are worked by permanent officials, and when the Chief Secretary comes here all he can do is to read to the House the answers sent to him by the Government officials. That has been the practice of every Chief Secretary; and with all the desire in the world to do the best he can—and I may say that I desire to attribute to the right hon. gentleman every desire to do what is good and best for Ireland—he will not be an exception, and he will find that though he is theoretically responsible for those Boards in

this House we may assume that the Boards are really irresponsible altogether.

There are some others of these Boards, like the Board of Primary Education in Ireland, which is actually irresponsible, and which boasts of being actually irresponsible. It is not responsible to Dublin Castle, nor to the Government, nor this House, and the Chief Secretary, who represents the Government, has no authority over it. Not one of the whole of these sixty-seven departments is responsible to the people of Ireland, or to Irish public opinion.

Now, these sixty-seven departments and these offices employ very nearly 100,000 officials, and these Boards have handed over to them seven and a half millions of money for the government of the country. That is to say, the whole civil government of Ireland per head of the population is more costly than the similar government of any other nation in Europe. It is far more costly than the government of England or Scotland. Scotland is a good case in point, because the population is nearly the same as that of Ireland. The civil government of Scotland to-day costs five and a half millions. The same government in Ireland costs seven and a half millions. That is immeasurably more costly than the government of other small nations of Europe, such as Norway, Sweden, Holland, Denmark and so forth. In looking over the figures I was interested to find that the mere civil government of Ireland, whose machinery I have sketched, costs more than the whole cost of the government (home and foreign), Army and Navy, Royal Family and so forth, of Roumania, Bulgaria, Servia and Greece.

The Imperial Government every year raises a large sum of money in Ireland, and that sum has been rapidly increasing of late. Let English representatives mark this fact, that the amount raised from Ireland has increased, while what is called Imperial contribution has diminished. The Imperial contribution, which is the surplus going to Imperial expenses after the government of Ireland is provided for, has gone on diminishing, but nevertheless the total amount raised in Ireland has increased within the last

ten years by £2,000,000 of money. That is to say that these Boards are having a good time and are increasing the cost of government right, left and centre. This £7,500,000 is supposed to be spent for the welfare and good government of Ireland, but nobody asks, and nobody has any real power to inquire, how that money is spent. I may be told that estimates are presented to Parliament, and so they are. Those who are familiar with the procedure in Committee of Supply know what that means. Three sittings every year are devoted to Irish Supply, and, as these are the only occasions, very often, upon which we can raise great questions of policy, often the whole of the three days are taken up with big debates, and not devoted to the details of Irish Supply at all. But, even if those opportunities were used in the most business-like way, what an utter absurdity to think that three sittings of this House are sufficient to exercise any real supervision and control over the expenditure of £7,500,000 by sixty-seven different authorities in Ireland. Therefore, the expenditure of this vast sum of money goes on practically unchallenged. Of the total of £7,500,000, £3,000,000 goes, in the shape of salaries and wages, into the pockets of officials and policemen in Ireland. Whilst this monstrous and unchecked extravagance is going on every real need of the country is being starved and neglected. What sort of government are we getting in Ireland, with these sixty-seven Boards spending £7,500,000? What is being done for education? This is a matter upon which there is admittedly no controversy, because both Conservative and Liberal Ministers agree that education in Ireland is in a deplorable condition.

I will not allude now to the University question, except to congratulate the Government upon having announced their intention of dealing with this question, and when they come to close quarters with it they will find those who represent the Catholic laity of Ireland perfectly reasonable men, who do not ask, and never have asked, for anything except real equality of treatment with their Protestant brethren. By the admission of every Education Minister of the last twenty-five years primary education is in a

lamentable condition in Ireland at the present moment as compared with England and Scotland. On this question Ireland is starved. I will give the House one or two figures. In the last four years, from 1902 to 1906, the Education Vote in England has been increased by £3,374,600. In Scotland during the same period the increase has been £619,128, but in Ireland, over the same period, the Education Vote has only been increased by £92,223. An Equivalent Grant of £185,000 a year is due to Ireland in connection with the Education Bill of 1902, but it has been grabbed for other purposes, and practically little or none of it has been devoted to primary education in Ireland. I remember very well the declaration made upon this subject by the right hon. gentleman the Member for Dover (Mr Wyndham) when in office. This was one of the subjects on which he was in full sympathy, I believe, with the demands we were making. He certainly made no disguise of the fact that he believed the condition of Primary Education in Ireland was lamentable. In one speech which he made, in 1904, he said that in order to put Irish schoolhouses in a sanitary condition—or anything like up to the standard that prevailed in England, to apply heating apparatus, and so forth—would cost something like £100,000, and that to meet the immediate necessities of education—primary and secondary—a sum of £200,000 should be provided. He had not means to provide it, and it has not been provided since. The Attorney-General for Ireland, speaking in August last, said that Primary Education had been neglected in Ireland in a shameful manner in the past, and that it called for attention as soon as the House could deal with it. If the position of Primary Education, he said, was to be properly improved, the school be properly equipped, the teachers be properly paid, and the children given a proper education, it would involve the expenditure of a large sum of money. During the recess there had been a most remarkable movement going on all over Ireland on this matter. Great meetings were held in every part of the country, and they were distinguished in this sense from any ordinary meetings, that they were

attended by all sections and creeds and politics. They were not political meetings at all. They all demanded that money should at once be forthcoming to enable teachers to be properly provided for, and to enable Irish schools to be properly provided and equipped. I ask the Chief Secretary to note this point. It is not yet too late for him to see that justice is done this year. The estimates are not yet completed. Still, I don't ask him to make any definite statement upon the question to-night; but I ask him seriously to look into this matter, and when he finds, as compared with England and Scotland, that Irish education is starved, that it is in a lamentable condition, that the Irish teachers are paid miserable wages, less very often than the local policemen, and when he finds Irish schools are not properly equipped, I ask him to use his influence with the Treasury and insist this year, as the matter will not brook delay, on some generous terms being given to education in Ireland.

It is not only education that is neglected. Take any of our great industries; take, for instance, the question of transit. The Irish railway rates are prohibitive, and there are whole sections of the country that are absolutely cut off from the outer world. The other day, just before I left Dublin, a deputation of gentlemen, headed by two Western Bishops, came to see me about a proposal to build a line of railway from Blacksod Bay to connect the country there with the rest of Ireland. That railway would run through a district about forty miles in diameter without any railway communication whatever, and without any market for their commodities open to the people. It was about as neglected as if it had been a savage island in some distant ocean, and could never have so remained for the past hundred years if we had an Irish Government to spend Irish money wisely on developing the country. Then there is the question of arterial drainage, and here I will carry Irish Unionist Members with me, because it hits them as well as us. Some of the most magnificent tracts in Ireland are ruined by annual flooding, and yet, while in every civilised country in Europe these things are remedied and

at small cost, not one thing is done, or one hand lifted, to remedy these things in Ireland, although these sixty-seven boards are spending this seven and a half millions every year. It is the same with housing of the working classes in the towns and the reclamation of waste lands. One of the most irritating things an Irishman can do is to read how in small countries, like Holland and Belgium and Denmark, the Government costs less than in Ireland, and yet they are able to spend millions on the reclamation of waste lands. Not one single sixpence is spent in this way in Ireland.

I came across the other day what I think is an interesting example of the spirit of Irish government. I suppose very few English Members take the trouble to read Irish Blue Books. But there was one issued recently which I think is intensely interesting. I allude to the Report of the Commission appointed by Lord Dudley to inquire into the state of the Poor-law in Ireland. That Commission reported just before the House rose. They trace back the history of the Poor-law in Ireland, and show that in the year 1836—seventy years ago—a Royal Commission was appointed, composed of some of the most eminently capable men in Ireland, to consider the question, whether the English Poor-law system was suitable to Ireland, and ought to be extended to that country, and this Commission reported unanimously that it was unsuitable and ought not to be extended to Ireland. Lord John Russell, who was Home Secretary at that time, was not satisfied, and he asked a member of the Poor-law Commission in England, who was an Englishman, who had never been in Ireland in his life, to pay a short visit to that country and form his own impressions. This stranger, who had never been in the country before, spent three weeks in Ireland, and he came back with the recommendation to Lord John Russell that the unanimous Report of the Royal Commission should be thrown on one side, and that the Government should extend the English Poor-law system to Ireland. Lord John Russell tore up the Report of the Irish Royal Commission and acted upon the report of this English gentleman. And now, seventy years after the Commis-

sion appointed by Lord Dudley has unanimously reported that from the commencement the English Poor-law system was quite unsuitable, that it has been a ghastly and costly failure, and they have recommended the Government to abolish it. No wonder that the people are still emigrating from Ireland when we have at one and the same time the most extravagant, and the most inefficient Government in the world.

As far as the people of Ireland are concerned, let me again repeat what I have said before—namely, that those who remain in Ireland are thoroughly and intensely disaffected and disloyal to your rule, and they will never be satisfied, and their representatives will never be satisfied, until they have got into their hands complete control of all those great interests which England has muddled and ruined during the century that has passed. That is the problem with which the Government are about to deal; that is the problem that they are pledged to deal with, on lines leading to complete self-government. Upon its solution, in my humble belief, depends, not merely the well-being of Ireland, but the well-being and honour of your Empire. What are the difficulties in the way of the Government?

I believe that no Government ever had a fairer opportunity of dealing with a great problem than that possessed by the Government at this moment. Ireland, as you have been told by the sympathetic speech of the mover of the Address—an old and tried friend of Ireland, who has been our friend all through our days of adversity in this House and out of it, and whom I congratulate on the honour paid to him by the Prime Minister and his party to-day, as has been pointed out by him in his speech—Ireland is to-day not only peaceful in the ordinary sense of the word, but is more crimeless than any other part of the United Kingdom; and there is, practically speaking, no political turmoil or agitation in the country. The whole country is expectant, waiting, anxiously looking to the Government for the redemption of their pledges. It would be an awful thing for the future of this country as well as of Ireland if the fact

that we are peaceful is made a reason for being slow or half-hearted in dealing with this question. Do not, I beg you once again, tell the Irish people that peaceful and quiet they get nothing, and that it is only by turmoil and disorder they can wring measures of reform from this House. Not only is Ireland peaceful, but you have got another great advantage. You are strong; you are so strong that you can afford to despise any suggestion that you are legislating for us because you want Irish votes and Irish support. You have the sympathy of the whole Empire behind you.

I read with interest the other day a speech made by the right hon. gentleman, the Member for South Dublin. In dealing with the possibility of a Home Rule measure being proposed, what was his argument? "Is it conceivable," he said, "that at the very moment when we are all anxious to draw the Empire closer together—to draw the Colonies closer to the Empire—that you should embark on what I would call the separation of Ireland?" What an utterly absurd question. What has drawn this Empire together? What has united the Colonies to the Empire and made them loyal and contented component parts of the Empire? It is the concession of that very thing the refusal of which to the Colonies caused rebellion, and the refusal of which in the case of the American Colonies lost them to the Empire, and the refusal of which has been the cause of all your Irish troubles for the last century. What did Sir Wilfrid Laurier say the other day? I presume you will listen with respect to the words of the Premier of Canada. He said: "To-day England has an Empire which is second to none, and which has only been equalled once in the course of history. Now the question is asked many a time, by friends and foes, how will the fabric be maintained, how can it be kept together, and how can so many elements be kept together, and how can so many elements be kept under the sway of the Empire of Great Britain? That, however, is a question no longer to be asked. It is a question answered sixty years ago, when the principle of local autonomy and legislative independ-

ence was introduced in all parts of the British Empire. The Empire of Rome fell by concentration; but the Empire of England exists by freedom, by local autonomy, by legislative independence."

Therefore, in legislating on this question of Ireland the Government will have at their back the sympathy of every self-governing portion of the whole Empire. Only within the last few months you had the declarations of the Parliaments of Canada and Australia of the most remarkable character contained in a petition sent to the King, asking that, in the interests of the Empire, the same measure of freedom should be given to Ireland as had made these countries content and prosperous. The other day you made a concession to the Boers. This is the second occasion now in which, in this House in my experience, I and my colleagues have taken part, gladly and with all our hearts, in helping to confer self-government on other portions of the British Empire. Every case has been justified by the result, and we ask now you should deal out to us the same remedy for discontent and want of prosperity that you have applied to your own Colonies. You have, further, the sympathy of the world. If you want to look for sympathy outside your Colonies, I suppose the country you would like to turn to would be America. You are never tired of talking of America as the blood relation of England. At any rate you look to America on all occasions. I tell you—and there is not a man in this House can contradict it—that the entire public opinion of America of all political parties, of all classes and creeds, from the great presiding officer (President Roosevelt) down through the great departments of Government in that country, the whole public opinion of that country is in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, and when, Sir, Mr Bryce lands in America, the magnificent reception he will get there from the American people will be enhanced by the knowledge that they possess, that he has been all through his political career a consistent advocate of Home Rule for Ireland.

What other advantage have you? I speak somewhat

diffidently about this—because I cannot speak from personal knowledge—but I believe we have the sympathy of the great mass of the English people; and, lastly, let me say, I do believe that there is a considerable change of opinion in that particular corner of Ulster which has been the home of the bitterest opposition to our movement, which you will find is of enormous advantage to you when you proceed with this question. I have been often attacked myself with reference to Ulster, but unjustly. My idea and ambition and hope has ever been that Ulster should throw in her lot with us. I speak not of the province, because the majority of the province is in favour of Home Rule, but I speak now of the corner of Ulster which is hostile. I was pained in reading the other day the speech of the Member for North Derry, in which he seemed to accuse me of having said, at a meeting I addressed at Coalisland last October, that the opposition to Home Rule in Ulster would be put down by us with a strong hand, from which he seemed to infer that I was anxious to ride roughshod over opinion in Ulster. Now, inasmuch as I desire to put my view in reference to Ulster before the House, I cannot do better than read an extract from that speech which will show how completely, unintentionally, I am sure, my views were misrepresented. Speaking on that occasion, I said: “And, fellow-countrymen, let me say that so far as what I call to-day the minority in Ulster is concerned, that it should be our greatest and most sacred duty to go to any length short of surrender of principle to disarm their hostility and to remove their suspicions. I admit fully that the minority in Ulster is rich and influential. I admit that it has been powerful enough in the past to stand between Ireland and Home Rule, but its power is waning. But, fellow-countrymen, while I am convinced that we can, if we are put to it, win Home Rule in spite of this minority, I confess to you that I don’t want Home Rule for Ireland to come in the garb of a bitter political defeat for any intelligent and honest section of my countrymen. I know, of course,” I said, and this is the sentence that is taken from the context—“That I know, of

course, that there is one section of the minority opposed to us that has no title to the names of honesty or intelligence.” “A section that it is impossible, hopeless, to conciliate or placate, a section that will, I believe, to the bitter end continue their policy of hatred and ascendancy. I am not speaking of them. After all, in reality they are only a handful even of the Protestants of Ulster, and I fear that they must be overborne by the strong hand. But I am speaking of the overwhelming majority of those who are ranked to-day as our opponents in Ulster. For my part, I say here, that of the overwhelming majority of these men I believe that they are honest and, according to their own sense of the word, patriotic. I believe that they are in large numbers honestly afraid to trust their property and their religious interests to their fellow-countrymen. Now, over these men, I say to-day, that if I can avoid it I want no party triumph. I want to influence their intelligence, I want to dissipate their suspicions, and I want to soften their hearts, and therefore, so long as it is possible for me to do so, even against hope, I will preach to them the doctrine of conciliation. I say here to-day that there are no lengths, short of the abandonment of the principles which you and I hold, to which I would not go to win the confidence of these men, and not to have them lost to Ireland. There are no safeguards which I would object to in a Home Rule Bill to-morrow to satisfy the fears which these men entertain about their religious interests, and I can say he is the best Irishman who does his best to-day by preaching toleration and conciliation to these men to bring all the sons of gallant Ulster into line in the battle for Ireland.” These are my views about Ulster, and it is a little hard, when I have spoken in a manner such as that about my opponents in Ulster, that one sentence should be picked out of the context of my speech, that I should be represented as saying that my only policy for my opponents in Ulster was to overbear them with a strong hand.

For all these reasons, because Ireland is peaceful, because you are strong, because you have the sympathy of the Empire, and the sympathy of the world, because the

English masses are friendly to Ireland, and because there is a change, as I believe, a movement of opinion in our direction going on in Ulster—for all these reasons I honestly believe this a propitious moment for settling this problem. I remember, in 1886, Mr Gladstone, in one of those great and inspired speeches of his upon the Irish question, speaking of that time as “one of those golden moments in our history; one of those opportunities which may come or may go, but which rarely return, or, if they return, return at long intervals, and in circumstances which no man can forecast. There have been several such golden moments, even in the tragic history of Ireland. The long periodic time has once more run out, and again the star is mounted in the heavens.” Twenty years ago the cup of hope and comfort was rudely dashed from Ireland’s lips. Now, for my part, I believe in the words of Mr Gladstone, that the star has once again risen in the heavens, and that again the golden opportunity has arisen for English statesmanship. Don’t, I beg of you, palter with this question of life and death; don’t, I beg of you, trifle with a desperate case; don’t merely “skin and film the ulcerous place.” The disease of Ireland is deep-seated. The time is long past for the use of palliatives. Every remedy has been tried except trusting the people. You have tried force in all its forms—on the scaffold and in the prison cell. You have had your twenty years of resolute government for which Lord Salisbury asked. You have tried conciliation and reform. Your conciliation has always been ignorant and blundering, and your reform has always been too late. Further, you have sent to Ireland from time to time the very best men you have. Take the list of statesmen who have gone to Ireland in the last one hundred years; you will find in that list the names of almost every great man in your history; one after another they have been sent to Ireland. They have all come back and told you they have failed, and many of them have told you also that their task was hopeless, and that the only chance of good government in Ireland was in some measure or other to trust the people.

My belief is that the only hope of Ireland lies in the education of her children, by which I mean the drawing out of all that is best in the character of the Irish race. That can only be done by bestowing responsibility upon them. You have done that in small matters. The Conservative Government has done it in small matters. The Act of 1898 gave Local Government to Ireland, and what has been the result? Why, in their little local Councils responsibility has brought with it soundness and sobriety of thought, and conduct and good government. Throw responsibility for larger matters, for national matters, upon the people, and instantly you will teach them lessons of self-control and self-respect, of sustained effort, of confidence in themselves and of hope in the future; the apathy and listlessness that to-day hang like a pall over Ireland will instantly be lifted, and these great qualities, which have enabled men of our race to prove themselves the most successful administrators and the best governors of your Colonial Empire—those great qualities that have enabled men of our race to rise to eminence in every land to which fortune has led them, will, at long last, be set free for the benefit of their own country, to cure her ills of centuries, and to transform her at last into the home of tranquillity and contentment. Believe me, Mr Speaker, and let me impress this, as my last word, upon the Government—nothing short of full trust in the people can work that seeming miracle, and I do beg of this powerful Government, and this friendly Parliament, when they come in a few short weeks to deal with this Irish question, to have the full courage of their convictions.

THE IRISH COUNCILS BILL

House of Commons, 7th May 1907.

On the 7th May 1907 the Government introduced a Measure for the establishment of Administrative Councils in Ireland. Mr Redmond spoke on the first reading of the Bill.

I DO not rise, let me say at once, for the purpose of answering the speech or attempting to answer the speech of the right hon. gentleman (Mr Balfour) who has just sat down. I stand at the opposite pole on this matter to him; yet, I must confess, there were some arguments he used of which I, looking at them from the opposite pole, felt the force. Therefore, I do not consider that it would be desirable for me on this occasion to enter into what I may call a debating speech in answer to the point raised by the right hon. gentleman. I desire to address myself, if the House will give me indulgence for a comparatively short time, to the measure which has been unfolded by the right hon. gentleman (Mr Birrell), as far as I understand it. My object will be very largely to try and make sure that I understand it, and to be very cautious about making any declaration on any point as to which I am not quite certain I am fully informed. Until the actual Bill of the right hon. gentleman is in my hands, and until I and my colleagues have had time to consider every portion of that scheme, and to elicit Irish public opinion with reference to it, no one will expect me to offer a deliberate or final judgment. My observations, therefore, with reference to any parts of the scheme, must be of a general nature and of a provisional character. At the same time I think the House of Commons is entitled to hear from us, without unnecessary delay, what the general attitude of the Irish Nationalist party is towards the scheme as described by the right hon. gentleman. Well, it is impossible to speak with precision

about details before one has had time to consider them, though there are some considerations that I can deal with without any reservation whatever, with perfect frankness, and I hope with perfect precision. My mind, this afternoon, has gone back—as the mind of the right hon. gentleman who introduced this measure—to those two other occasions when proposals were made for dealing with this Irish problem. In 1886 and 1893 that great statesman, Mr Gladstone, whose name will be for ever associated with the policy of justice to Ireland, proposed to solve this Irish problem by a full and frank concession of self-government and autonomy to the Irish people. We were asked by him to receive his proposals as a settlement of the demands which we were making, and notwithstanding the fact that there was some strong opinion in Ireland as to certain parts of the scheme, we frankly accepted the proposals. The position to-day is entirely different—not that I think the view of the Government or the party opposite, speaking of them as a whole, is different from the view entertained by Mr Gladstone as to the final and only real solution of this problem. What they offer us to-day is not Home Rule; it is not offered to us as Home Rule; it is not offered as a substitute for, or an alternative to, Home Rule. I suppose it is not necessary for me to say again what I understand by Home Rule. It is known by men of every party in this House and everybody of all parties in this country. What we mean by Home Rule is a freely-elected Irish Parliament with an executive responsible to it. What we mean by Home Rule is that in the management of all exclusively Irish affairs Irish public opinion shall be as powerful as the public opinion of Canada or Australia is in the management of Canadian or Australian affairs. That is our claim; we rest that claim on historic right, on historic title, but we rest it also on the admitted failure of English government in Ireland for the last 100 years. I say admitted failure. What Unionist or Conservative statesman has gone to Ireland for the last twenty-five years to carry out Unionist policy who has not frankly admitted that the state of government in Ireland was injurious to Ireland and im-

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possible to sustain? Why, I myself heard the present Leader of the Unionist party in the House of Lords declare a few short months ago that the system of Government by Dublin Castle was an anachronism and could not continue to exist as it is to-day. What has the history been of your rule? The history of famine, of misery, of insurrection, of depopulation. These are facts that cannot be disputed. There have been three unsuccessful outbreaks of insurrection during that time, there has been one great famine which swept away in one year 1,500,000 of the Irish people by starvation. There have been famines every decade during that period, and depopulation is going on to this very moment, so that in a little over fifty years one half of the population has entirely gone. You may differ from me as to the precise cause of all these things, but you must admit that your rule has not been a success, but a failure. We have always been quite frank in these matters in the House of Commons, and I say that if your rule had been as good in the last 100 years as it has been bad, if it had led to the material advancement of Ireland—as in the case of Egypt—still our claim would have remained, because we stand by the principle enunciated by the Prime Minister himself quite recently, when he said, “good government can never be a substitute for self-government.” No man has any doubt what our demand means, and it can only be met by full trust in the Irish people. Your own history proves it. You tried a half-way House in Canada, and you failed. You conceded autonomy to Canada, and you turned that great province into a great united and prosperous nation. The lesson you have learned in Canada you have bettered in Australia. And is there no significance in the presence in England at this moment of General Botha? He is the Prime Minister of a self-governing Transvaal who tells you in his speeches that he, who three or four years ago was your open foe in the field, has to-day become a loyal member of your Empire. Why? Because you have fully trusted him and his people. We maintain that by applying that principle to Ireland, and by applying that principle alone, can this Irish pro-

blem be solved. The Government do not offer us such a solution, and the Government do not pretend to do so. If this scheme were offered to us as a scheme of Home Rule, if it were offered as a substitute or an alternative, I should feel it my duty, speaking in the name of my colleagues here, and I think in the name of Irish Nationalists in every part of the world, to reject and repudiate it. So far as I understand this scheme it is a continuation and development of the policy which the Tory party applied to Ireland in 1898 by the grant of county councils, and that in spite of the fact that Lord Salisbury had declared that it was a greater calamity than Home Rule itself. Under this scheme as proposed there is no legislative power whatever extended to this Council—not even the power of private Bill legislation. Let me say this, I am not in favour of getting maimed and dwarfed legislative powers. I would prefer you should give no legislative power at all by this scheme than give dwarfed, maimed and limited powers. You have given no legislative power, and I say the creation of such a body as this is a continuation and development of the policy of the Tory party in 1898, and simply gives control to the Irish people over the most important of those irresponsible boards which have become a by-word in this country, and which have for years past been wasting millions of money in a rotten and inefficient system of Government. The scheme, moreover, as I understand it, reproduces almost exactly, except in one particular which I will mention, the original scheme for dealing with the Irish problem which was put forward by the right hon. gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. I have heard some people throw doubt upon that. I was myself told I was mistaken in that because that right hon. gentleman's scheme was a scheme for provincial councils in Ireland. That is not so. I have here a quotation from the speech of the right hon. gentleman the Member for West Birmingham in 1885, before Mr Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill. He says:

“I would concede the widest possible measure of democratic Government to the Irish people. Nearly twelve months ago I prepared a scheme with this object, which in addition to pro-

viding for a popular representative authority throughout the country proposed also the establishment of a national legislative council to which might be referred the administration, supervision, and control which are now exercised by some of the Departments in London, and of those Departments in Ireland which are known commonly under the name of Dublin Castle. I proposed to sweep away all the network of boards appointed by the English Government carrying with them the seed of English authority, whose interference produces so much irritation, so much annoyance, and so much injury to Ireland."

That scheme was originally proposed as an answer to our demand for Home Rule, and as such it was promptly rejected. If this scheme were proposed as an answer to our demand for Home Rule, and if we were asked to say any such scheme as this would satisfy our aspirations or meet the necessities of the case, it would meet with precisely the same fate. Let me say that these being our views on the Home Rule problem, we, still as Home Rulers, feel ourselves justified in saying we can, at anyrate, look on the provisions of this scheme consistently with the maintenance of those aspirations and those views. I want to apply some tests to this proposal. The first question I have to ask myself is this—Does this scheme give a genuine and effective control to Irish public opinion over those matters that are referred to the Council? If not, the scheme is worse than useless. If any such scheme is to have any value at all the control must be genuine. The first question I have to ask is as to the constitution of this Council. I was delighted to hear the Leader of the Opposition championing the democratic principle against the nominated element.

Mr A. J. BALFOUR: The Minister claimed it was democratic, and I said it was undemocratic.

Mr JOHN REDMOND: I did not know the democratic principle had such a haughty champion. I do not like the nominative principle. I say with the Leader of the Opposition it is quite undemocratic. I object to the nominated element on this Council. But when I am told that the object the Government had in view in putting that nominated element on the Council was to give a somewhat larger

representation if they can to that small minority in Ireland who are suspicious and who entertain fears as to the action of the majority of their fellow-countrymen, then I say I am quite willing to accept this undemocratic principle, or any other safeguard the wit of man can devise, consistent with the ordinary principle of representative Government, which is necessary to show this minority in Ireland that their fears are groundless. I have often been accused—indeed, I think I was accused in yesterday's *London Times*—of having declared that my policy was to put down the Unionist minority in Ireland with a strong hand. I have already explained that in this House. I never said anything of the kind. On the contrary, the speech I made was a speech in which I stated—and I repeat it here now—that so far as the overwhelming bulk of our opponents in Ireland are concerned, I believe they are honest opponents. I believe their fears are groundless and mistaken, but I believe they are honest, and there is no length to which I am not prepared to go to meet these fears. Therefore I am prepared to accept and swallow this undemocratic and nominated element, if it is put forward upon this ground by the Government. Of course it will be repudiated in the House by hon. Members from a portion of Ulster who say they do not want it and it is no use. The Leader of the Opposition spoke of Ulster. The majority of the Members from Ulster are in favour of Home Rule. I am bound to say that the more violent of the Ulster representatives from the other corner of the province who speak in this House do not in my opinion—I say it without the slightest desire to offend them in any way—really voice the genuine Unionist opinion of the majority of our opponents in Ulster. I believe they voice the opinion of a small minority in the line they take. They probably will repudiate this anti-democratic provision. Still, notwithstanding that, I am prepared to accept it, at anyrate, as a pledge of my good faith that I am willing in this Bill, or in any Home Rule Bill which may see the light of day, to agree to any conceivable safeguards in order to show that the desire of the majority of the Irish people is not to op-

press or to do wrong to anybody. What control will this Assembly so constituted exercise? Up to a certain point in the speech of the right hon. gentleman I thought that the control would really be absolute and complete. I thought that the Council, through its committees and by its own action, would have complete power over the Departments, would have complete power over the officials of the Departments, and would have power over the finances of the Departments; but I confess that a question then arose in my mind about the provision as to reservation by the Lord-Lieutenant. Of course, there must be power of reservation in any Home Rule scheme in the world. There is the power of veto by some responsible person. The Lord-Lieutenant, or the Governor in the case of a colony, must have the power of reservation or veto, and I do not object to the Lord-Lieutenant having the power of reserving these resolutions, of confirming or rescinding them, or of referring them back again to the Assembly. That is quite right; but if I understood the right hon. Gentleman properly there is apparently a proposal to give power to the Lord-Lieutenant to do something entirely different, and that is instead of rescinding or confirming or referring back, of simply filing the resolutions and doing the thing himself in his own way and according to his own pleasure. If so, then undoubtedly the power would rest in the Lord-Lieutenant of interfering with and thwarting every single act, large or small, of this Council. In point of fact, if a hostile Lord-Lieutenant was there, he might, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, stop the entire machine on every resolution come to, and he might do it himself irrespective of the view of the Council. Surely that cannot be the real intention of the Government. If that is their intention, then it destroys the real and genuine character of the power given to this Council. But if that is not their intention, if I have misunderstood the right hon. gentleman on that point, then I am fain to confess that the Bill apparently does give genuine and complete control over those matters that are referred to the Council. The next test I want to apply is this. Is the scheme for

the exercise of these powers by the Council a workable scheme? The Government had before them two models. They had before them what may be called the national or Parliamentary model, and they had the municipal model. The national or Parliamentary model takes the form of Ministers in the Assembly charged with the management of certain Departments and responsible directly to the Assembly. The municipal model, on the other hand, is a series of committees. I am not sure that even the experience of the greater county councils goes entirely to prove that in municipal matters that model is entirely satisfactory. But apparently the Government have halted between the two, because while they say that the work shall be done by committees they create a chairman of each committee, to be nominated by the Crown apparently, who will receive a salary. In the ordinary course of events the chairman of a committee would be in the position of a Minister. The chairman would really exercise over his Department the same kind of control which the Chief Secretary is supposed to exercise, and of course cannot, over the whole of the forty-five boards in Dublin Castle. That is to say, he would really be in the position of a Minister. If so, I submit that to hamper him with a committee is an embarrassment and a mischief. I do not believe in this committee system. I do not believe it is a practical system. It would be far better to have one man, selected as the chairmen of these committees are to be selected, to have charge, so far as the Council is concerned, of the working of the Department, and then all these chairmen acting together could form a sort of organic body which would give cohesion, would co-ordinate, and give stability to the whole of the work. I am afraid that the Government seem to have shrunk from that for fear the argument would be used against them that they were really creating a Ministry. I am afraid that in the Bill as it stands they are doing neither the one thing nor the other. They are halting between the two, and therefore I am most doubtful whether this machinery of committees is workable machinery. Of course, if these chairmen of com-

mittees are to be appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant on the constitutional principle that they are to be men representing the will for the time being of the majority of the Council, then on that theory no one, I think, would object to the Crown exercising this power. I do not know whether that is the intention of the Government. I do not know whether it is a thing that is going to be put in the Bill at all, but I would like to know what their intention is. On the other hand, if these appointments are to be made by the Lord-Lieutenant quite irrespective of the opinion of the Council, then that is a provision I must enter my protest against. There are to be created apparently two Boards of Education. The primary board and the intermediate board are to be abolished apparently, and one Department is to be put in their place—a Department over which there will be a committee, as in the case of all the other Departments, and over which the committee of the Council will have complete power with the reservation I have mentioned. The only difference, apparently, is that on this education committee there are to be some outsiders nominated by the Lord-Lieutenant. I want to ask some questions as to the creation of this Department. Who is to create it? When is it to be created? Is it to be created by the Lord-Lieutenant? If so, is it to be without consultation with the Council? That goes to the very root of the thing. You are giving power to the Council to dismiss officials, safeguarding their rights as to pensions, superannuation and so forth, but what an absurd thing it would be for you the day before this Bill came into law to create a new Department without consulting public opinion in Ireland at all, without waiting for the Council to express an opinion, and thereby, perhaps, put at the head of the Department, or in a responsible position in the Department, a man whom the Council next day, even though it did cost them a considerable amount of money, would probably dismiss from office. I have to ask, therefore, whether the creation of the Education Department is to be carried out in consultation with the Council. This question of the creation of an Education Department is a

thorny and difficult one. We have been denouncing these nominated and irresponsible boards for decades in this House, and whenever a Minister stood up and said: "Well, will you agree to the abolition of these boards and the creation of a Government Department?" we said, "No, bad and all as these boards are, we should prefer them to remain there rather than that education should be put under a new Department responsible to an English House of Commons and an English Government." Therefore, we must look all round this project before expressing any decided opinion upon it, and I must ask for further information as to how the Department is to be created. The same thing applies to the second Department, which apparently is to be called the Irish Treasury. I do not know how that is to be appointed, and almost the same considerations apply to it. Now I come to the most serious of all the tests that must be applied to this measure, namely, is the finance of this measure just to Ireland, and is it sufficient for the proper working of this scheme? The whole question really turns upon this. First of all, I must enter a protest that any financial scheme put forward in this Bill must be considered by us and dealt with by us without prejudice to the great outstanding problem of the financial relations between the two countries. Upon that matter we stand upon the Report of your own Royal Commission, men of your own, British experts who heard the evidence of the greatest British financiers of the day, including, the Opposition will be glad to remember, Lord Milner, the Treasury officials, as well as men like Sir Robert Giffen, and who came to the unanimous conclusion—I believe there was one caveat from Sir David Barbour—but with that exception they came practically to the unanimous conclusion that the terms of the Act of Union were being violated, and that Ireland was being overtaxed, and had been since the year 1852, to the extent of between two and three millions a year. There is a verdict in our favour. That is a verdict in our favour by a tribunal manned by yourselves. And that verdict has never been appealed from, and it stands now. I must enter a caveat

that so far as the finances of this Bill are concerned that nothing can be considered by us except clearly without prejudice to the larger outstanding problems of the financial relations between this country and Ireland. Moreover, I give due notice to the Government that even if this Bill were passed to-morrow our demand would continue and would be renewed and pressed with all the vigour at our command for a settlement of the larger question. Now let me consider the finances as described by the right hon. gentleman. As I understand it, the present cost of these Departments is in the first instance to be handed over. In addition to that the local taxation moneys, which amount to £1,300,000, are to be paid into an Irish fund. But of course that is no advantage to the Council or to Ireland. That is money that is being paid already, and the Council will be as a sort of aqueduct for paying the money out. So that it ought to be struck out of the calculation altogether. We have the present cost of the Departments roughly £2,000,000, and in addition to that £650,000 a year. We are told that £300,000 of that is in respect of Public Works, and £114,000 in respect of certain educational charges are to be put to what is called the capital account. I do not know what that means. If it means that these sums of £300,000 and £114,000 are not to be regarded as really part of the income of the Council, but small sums of money that will be paid every year for five or six years, then I have to express the gravest dissatisfaction. Let me deal with the question of public works. You must remember that in dealing with Ireland you are dealing with a neglected property, one that has fallen into dilapidation; and the first thing you have to do is to spend a considerable sum of money in putting the place into decent order. The right hon. gentleman mentioned a number of various directions in which money would have to be spent on public works—railways, harbours and so forth. Let me give the House an example of just one. There have been a series of Royal Commissions, extending I do not know how far back, dealing with the question of arterial drainage in Ireland. One of these reported that

the want of arterial drainage is not only doing serious injury to agriculture, but is poisoning the climate, and is a cause of disease and sickness of all sorts and kind. We have never got any remedy. The remedy has always been to appoint a new Royal Commission. Just before going out of office the late Government, in answer to our claim, having told us they could not do anything for us, gave us another Commission. This Commission has just reported, and anything more striking I cannot imagine. It first of all confirms everything said by all its predecessors extending back for generations; and it winds up by declaring that the state of things in Ireland is absolutely appalling. It says:

“The annual rainfall is not greater than in England or Scotland, yet the climate is much damper. The humidity, we believe, is due, not only to the Gulf Stream and the southern winds, but also to the extent of the lodgment of the water all over the country. . . . Besides improving the climate, drainage would act upon the public health. There would be less pulmonary disease, less rheumatism, and less disease of other descriptions. There are districts after districts in which there is an enormous amount of work to be done.”

Take the case which Unionist Members for Ireland press upon the Government, the flooding of the Bann—a flooding affecting five Ulster counties and causing widespread misery and disease all over the district. In the district of the river Barrow there are 46,000 acres of good land that are regularly flooded, and all the towns in that district are poisoned. All the medical experts tell us that the excessive cases of consumption and other diseases are due to the same cause. They can have no water supply. The water supply of these towns is always polluted. There is no system of drainage in these towns. The water practically comes up and blocks the sewers, and in that way disease is brought about. A more appalling state of things than exists on this drainage question you cannot conceive. Sir Antony Macdonell made a speech in which, having deprecated the horrors of this state of things, he conceded it would take £3,000,000 to remedy it. He very much

understated the case. The present Secretary to the Treasury said the other day, I think, £5,000,000, and unless I am greatly mistaken the right hon. gentleman the Member for Dover said on one occasion, when he was in office, that the cost of a proper system of arterial drainage all over Ireland would run into £20,000,000. I say nothing of the 1,500,000 acres of waste land which experts tell us can be reclaimed or of the afforestation of 3,000,000 acres. Reafforestation is a great question. In 1886 a Committee was appointed to inquire into it. A Dutch expert gave evidence, and he declared that if the forests of Ireland had been cared for and fostered they would to-day be worth £100,000,000 of money. I say nothing about railroads, harbours and other items. I take this one question of drainage, and I say that if this £300,000 is not to be part of the income, but is to be a capital sum which at the end of five years is to cease, then your provision for public works in Ireland is ludicrously inadequate. I say the same about education. The provision which would thus be made for education would be altogether ludicrous. By what was said by statesmen on both sides of this House it would require £200,000, or more probably £300,000, a year to put primary education upon a proper footing. Does the House realise the fact that in Ireland the teacher of our children is paid less than the policemen? To remove that scandal will take a vast sum of money. Then there is intermediate education. Another anomaly of our precious system of government is that the amount to be spent upon intermediate education in Ireland depends upon the amount of whisky consumed by the people. [Laughter.] The House laughs at that, and, I suppose, many hon. Members are sceptical about the truth of it; but it is absolutely true. More than half of the income of the Intermediate Board in Ireland comes from whisky ["It is the same in Scotland and in England."] I do not know about that. I put this question to my hon. friends opposite. There has been a wave of temperance, to the delight of everybody, flowing over these countries. What has the result been in England? Has that wave of temper-

ance reduced by £20,000 a year the intermediate education grants? No. It has not reduced them by one penny, whereas in Ireland for the last four or five years, I think, the diminution in the consumption of whisky has had this direct result, that the grants for intermediate education have been reduced by about £12,000 to £15,000 a year, and we cannot even raise the question for discussion in this House, because we are told there is no Vote on the Estimates which would enable us to do so. Then there is the large provision which must be made for University education. I do not know whether, if this Bill were passed to-morrow and immediately afterwards a settlement of the University question were proposed, it would not be quite consistent to throw the cost of that settlement upon this Irish Fund you are now creating. For all these reasons I am myself strongly of opinion that the amount mentioned of £650,000 a year is altogether inadequate. Really, when the right hon. gentleman the Leader of the Opposition talks about the poor British taxpayer, is it not playing it a little bit too low down to profess that he thinks for one single moment that the British taxpayer is to provide this money? You get over £10,000,000 a year at the present moment of Irish money in Imperial taxes, and apart altogether from the finding of the Royal Commission you will find that every single penny required for a measure of this kind will come directly from the taxes paid by the Irish people themselves. So far from this Bill providing for the present cost of these Departments and the floating balance, so to speak, for the development of Ireland, the whole of that £650,000 will be mortgaged—every penny of it—from the day the measure passes, and it will be impossible under those conditions to work the scheme successfully. But we are told, “You have got your savings.” The one great service upon which there can be any real appreciable saving you do not hand over to the Council at all, namely, the police service. The police in Ireland cost exactly three times what the police in Scotland cost, and I do not know that anyone will assert that Scotland is freer from crime than Ireland. I may put it in this way. In Ireland we

have two and a half policemen for every 1000 of our population. In Scotland you have only one policeman for every 800 of your population. The cost of the police in Scotland is £500,000. The cost of the police in Ireland is £1,500,000. That is the only service I know of where you could in a short time make a real saving. It is all nonsense to say it is necessary to keep up this great police force. It has been kept up as a separate political garrison. If once you could enlist the sympathy and confidence of the Irish people, it certainly is not an extraordinary thing to prophesy that Ireland could be policed by as few men and at as little cost as Scotland. In that way you would save £1,000,000 a year. I would ask the right hon. gentleman where would that saving go? The Government are going to keep control under the present existing system of the police. Are they going to be kind enough to keep all savings that may be made under that service? If they are it is a monstrous injustice. It should be handed over for the service of the country. One word more and I am finished about this question of finance. I do not think the right hon. gentleman was very clear about the Land Acts finance, and he did not convince me by his statement. Enormous liabilities exist and fresh ones are springing up every day under the Land Act of 1903. Are these expenses to be thrown on the Irish Council, or are they to be borne by the Treasury? That is a serious question, involving a vast sum of money, and until we have a clear and definite answer to it, it is impossible for us to express an opinion upon the question of finance as a whole. One more question as to a matter which concerns the Irish Members sitting here more than any other Members of this House, although it ought to concern every Member of this House. It is, Will this scheme, if carried into effect, be a hindrance or an aid to Home Rule? In other words, can a Home Ruler accept it? On the answer to that question our support of this Bill must depend. That is the question which will be submitted to our fellow-countrymen at the National Convention to be held in the City of Dublin very shortly, but it will be our duty to express our opinion on

this Bill having given it consideration. If it does not give a real and effective control over these departments, if it does not prove a workable scheme and its finance is unjust, then this Bill, if carried into law, would lead to a breakdown. The Leader of the Opposition seems to think that a breakdown would be a good thing for Home Rule. I take exactly the opposite view. If this scheme came into operation and broke down what would people say? What would the right hon. gentleman say? Not that the breakdown was due to this defect in the law or to this defect in the machine. No, they would say that the breakdown of the machine was due to defects in the character of the Irish people who conducted the machine, and we cannot take the responsibility of advising our people to accept any scheme which in our honest judgment we believe to be unworkable; because if it is unworkable I think that its breakdown will be looked upon by the people of England as a proof of the incapacity of the Irish people for self-government. But if, on the other hand, when we have considered it, we believe that this scheme is of such a character as to be capable of being worked with moderate success, I for one would agree that its enactment will be an aid and not a hindrance to Home Rule. If it works successfully it will show two things, I think—first, that the Irish people are not bereft of those qualities which have made their race successful governors everywhere else in the world; and, secondly, it will prove that the people of Ireland are not incapable of self-government, and it will also prove that they will not rest content until they get the full measure for which they are asking. I believe the more prosperous you make the people of Ireland, the better you educate them, and the wider you extend the powers of the Irish people, the greater will be their determination to obtain complete self-government. In that view I am inclined to think the successful working of this Bill would be an aid to Home Rule, and I can say for myself to-night I am anxious to find in this scheme, if I can, an instrument which, while it will admittedly not solve the Irish problem, will, at any rate, remove some of those most glaring and

palpable causes which keep Ireland to-day poverty-stricken and Irishmen hopeless and discontented. It is in that sense that my colleagues and I will address ourselves to the serious consideration of this Bill. I have never in all the long years that I have been in this House spoken under such a heavy sense of responsibility as I am speaking on this measure this afternoon. Ever since Mr Gladstone's Bill of 1886 Ireland has been waiting for some scheme to settle the problem—waiting sometimes in hope, sometimes almost in despair, but the horrible thing is this, that all the time that Ireland has been so waiting there has been a gaping wound in her side and her sons have had to stand by helpless while they saw her very life-blood flowing out. Who can say that is an exaggeration? Twenty years of resolute government by the party above the gangway have diminished the population of Ireland by a million. No man in any position of influence can take upon himself the awful responsibility of despising and putting upon one side any device that may arrest that hæmorrhage, even although he believed, as I do, that far different remedies must be applied before Ireland can stand upon her feet in vigorous strength. We are determined as far as we are concerned that these other remedies shall be applied, but in the meantime we should shrink from the responsibility of rejecting anything which, after that full consideration which the Bill will receive, seems to our deliberate judgment calculated to relieve the sufferings of Ireland and hasten the day of her full national convalescence.

DUBLIN CONVENTION

Dublin, 21st May 1907.

AN Irish National Convention met in the Mansion House, Dublin, under the Presidency of Mr Redmond, to consider the Irish National Councils Bill which had been read a first time in the House of Commons on 7th May 1907. The Convention rejected the Bill unanimously.

I RISE now to move the first resolution on the agenda—
1. That this Convention, representative of Irish national opinion, emphatically places on record its profound conviction that nothing can satisfy the national aspirations of Ireland, or bring peace and contentment to our people, but a measure of self-government, which will give to the Irish people complete control of their own domestic affairs. That while we have never wavered in our belief that it was an impossibility to produce any logical or workable scheme for the extension and development of popular power and responsibility in Ireland short of the concession of Home Rule, at the same time, in accordance with the resolution of the National Directory of 5th February 1907, and with public declarations made from time to time on our behalf, we have been willing to give fair consideration to any scheme prepared by British Ministers which in their opinion would be consistent with, and lead up to, the larger policy to which they were pledged. That, having considered the Irish Council Bill introduced by the Government, we declare that it is utterly inadequate in its scope and unsatisfactory in its details, and should be rejected by the Irish nation, and we regard the production of such a measure by a British Government pledged to Home Rule as confirmation of the position we have always taken up, that any attempt to settle the Irish problem by half measures would be entirely unsuccessful. And we call upon the

Irish party to oppose the Bill in the House of Commons, and to press upon the Government with all their strength and power to introduce a measure for the establishment of a native Parliament with a responsible executive having power over all purely Irish affairs; and at this crisis in the fortunes of Ireland we invite all the Nationalist forces of the country to unite in support of our representatives in Parliament so as to enable them to effectively press for a speedy and genuine settlement of the Irish Question. Now, before I come to the reasons which have induced me to give to the Convention the advice contained in that resolution, there are three preliminary points that I want to dispose of in a few words. A suggestion has been made, not, indeed, in a friendly quarter, but in quarters notoriously hostile to the national party and the national organisation—a suggestion has been made that I and Mr Dillon and some others of the leaders of the National party in Parliament are in some way committed to this Bill and to the Government, and that that was the reason that we voted in favour of the introduction and printing of the Bill. There is not a shadow of foundation for that statement. We are not committed to the Bill as a whole, we are not committed to the details of the Bill, we are not committed to the Government. On the contrary, allow me to say this—and it is as far as I can go on this point—on the contrary, the framers of this Bill entirely refused the advice which I gave them as to the only safe basis on which the constitution of this new body could be founded. We voted for the introduction and printing of the Bill because we desired to fulfil a public pledge given to Ireland that the Bill would be submitted to a National Convention. Now, the second preliminary point I want to make is this. It has been said that I ought to have prevented the introduction of this Bill at all. It is a question whether I had any such power, but if I had the power and had exercised it I can well imagine how the critics of the Irish party would have declared that I had stood between Ireland and some great unknown boon; and we would have had to stand by with our mouths closed, unable to explain to the

Irish people the real value of the suggested legislation. The third point I wish to mention is this. I have been personally denounced because I did not rise in my place immediately the Bill was explained and condemn and denounce it out of hand. Had I done so I would have broken a solemn pledge to submit the Bill to this Convention. Allow me to read for you the terms of that pledge. Speaking on the 23rd of September last, I said:

“ Well, what I have to say is this, that when the scheme is produced it will be anxiously and carefully examined. It will be submitted to the judgment of the Irish people, and no decision will be come to, either by me or by the Irish party, until the whole question has been submitted to a National Convention representative of all the people in the country. But, for myself, I wish to say this, and to say it at once, that when the hour comes any influence which I possess with my fellow-countrymen will be used to induce them to firmly reject any proposals, no matter how plausible they may seem, which in my judgment may be calculated to injure the prestige and power of the Irish party which tend, in my judgment, to weaken or disrupt the national movement, because my first and greatest policy, which overshadows everything else, is to preserve a united national party in Parliament and to preserve a united and powerful organisation in Ireland until we have achieved the full measure of national freedom to which we are entitled. That, therefore, will be the touchstone. Someone has said there is no halfway house. That is a matter of opinion, and my own belief is that no scheme short of trusting the people fully can eventually succeed. But the touchstone that must be applied to any scheme of the Government is this—is it a scheme which we can take for what it is worth as an instalment without the danger of its breaking up and of weakening the national party or the national organisation? If the national party is endangered, and if the national organisation is endangered, then, no matter how plausible a scheme may be, my policy is to preserve all these great weapons un-

blunted. And, therefore, my advice would be in favour of its rejection."

Gentlemen, I am here to-day to fulfil that two-fold pledge. I am here to submit this scheme of the Government to the decision of this free Convention, and if I had out of hand, without consulting this Convention, taken it on myself instantly to get up and reject the Bill in the House of Commons, I think I can imagine some of the epithets that would have been applied to me by these same critics. "Would-be dictator," "Would-be despot," "Trying to smother Irish opinion." I am here to fulfil the second part of the pledge also—that is, to give perfectly frankly and perfectly respectfully to the Convention my views on this scheme and my advice to the delegates. Now, to properly appreciate the situation in which we stand at this moment it is necessary for us to go back shortly into the history of this Devolution question. The common charge is made against us that three years ago we refused a better scheme which was offered to us by the Tory Government. How short public memories are. I wonder how many men in this room, keen politicians though we all are, remember at this moment what precisely the Devolution scheme of Lord Dunraven was. I have it here. Allow me to revive your memory. Lord Dunraven's scheme proposed—these are the words:

"The creation of a Council to exercise administrative control over Irish finance; and, secondly, the devolution of certain Parliamentary functions connected with local business, including Irish Private Bills, but without any legislative initiative whatever."

And what was the constitution of this Council? Twelve men nominated by the Crown; 12 men nominated by groups of County Councils, the Lord Lieutenant as chairman with a casting vote. That is to say, not a single one of them elected directly by the people; and 13 as against 12 actually nominated by the Crown. Whatever the defects of the present Bill may be—and we know they are many—everyone who knows the facts is aware that it is a thousand times better with its Council, three-fourths of which

is elected by the people—a thousand times better than the scheme put forward by Lord Dunraven. And not only was that Devolution scheme not a better scheme than this; it was a far worse one, but it was not refused by us because it was never offered to us, and we had not the opportunity, therefore, of either considering or rejecting it. It was put forward by Lord Dunraven, and it was instantly denounced by Mr Wyndham, and because Mr Wyndham was suspected by the Tory Government of having some secret leanings in that direction he was obliged to resign his office. Therefore, I am justified in saying that it is a calumny of the worst type to say that we, who are considering this Bill to-day, rejected a better Bill which was offered to us by the Tories three years ago. Well, this proposal of Lord Dunraven had a considerable influence on the present situation. Remember what occurred. It was hailed with approval and delight in certain Nationalist quarters in Ireland, and most unquestionably, in consequence of the reception given to Lord Dunraven's scheme, the idea that Ireland would be willing for a settlement of the national question by steps and instalments got a lodgment in the minds of English Liberal politicians, and in consequence of that attitude English politicians who were for the last twenty years, and will tell you they are to-day, convinced that the ultimate settlement must be Home Rule, were induced to publicly pledge themselves that they would attempt the settlement by this policy of instalments, and I, therefore, say that the responsibility for this Bill which we are now considering largely rests upon those who first encouraged this idea of Devolution. For myself, I have always expressed in public and in private my opinion that no half-way house on this question is possible, but at the same time I am, or, at anyrate, I try to be, a practical politician. I say in the lodgment this idea of instalments had got in the minds of English statesmen I recognised the fact, and after all in politics the first essential is to recognise facts, I recognised the fact that in this Parliament we were not going to get a pure Home Rule Bill offered, and I consented, and I was absolutely

right in consenting, that whatever scheme short of that sort was put forward would be considered calmly on its merits, even by those who, like myself, had no belief in the possibility of any logical or workable scheme short of full trust in the people. Now, with reference to this Bill you are the masters. I put my views before you, as is my right. I give you my advice, as is my duty, but I seek to bring no pressure upon any man in this assembly. This is a free assembly. The moment these Conventions cease to be free assemblies the sooner they are abolished the better. Their only reason for existence is that they are free assemblies where the honest opinions of the people find free vent. I have put my views and my advice, in the form of a resolution, on the agenda for convenience of discussion, and I repeat every man is free. I seek to influence no man except by my arguments, and the fact that this is moved from the Chair and by the Chairman for the time being of the Irish party I don't desire to be used as an argument at all. Consider the advice that I give you, and act according to your own consciences.

Well, now, what is the advice? I feel, after the most anxious and mature consideration, that this scheme is unworkable. If it is unworkable, then it must end in disaster and disgrace, and undoubtedly the failure will be used as an argument against the capacity of Irishmen for self-government. Allow me to read for you an extract from a speech of mine on this point, made on the 7th October last:—"What I believe is most to be dreaded is the production of a scheme for the better government of Ireland that in practice would not work—of something cramped and crooked and not practical. If such a scheme were produced, and if it were passed, undoubtedly, what would happen would be it would inevitably fail—it would break down. And even if the national representatives of the country honestly tried to work it for what it was worth it would lead to friction and failure and destruction and would bring disgrace upon everyone concerned. Now, from our point of view what would be the result—would the failure of such a scheme be attributed to the defects

of that scheme? Not at all. The failure would be attributed to the alleged incapacity of the Irish people for self-government. And in addition to that, in all human probability the National Union would be disrupted and the National party, which with an organised country behind it I believe to be Ireland's greatest weapon at the present moment, would be demoralised and perhaps destroyed. I repeat here what I said a few days ago in the County of Limerick—any measure produced by the Government so constructed that in our opinion it could not work, so constructed that in our opinion it would lead to friction and to failure—any such scheme as that, it will, in my judgment, be the duty of the National party to repudiate." Now, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will not accuse me of egotism in making these quotations from my own declarations. But in making these speeches I felt that I was speaking for the National party; and, therefore, it is essential that these declarations should now be recalled.

Speaking the other night on the introduction of the Bill in the House of Commons, I repeated almost in the same words the declarations that I have read. I said:

"Will this scheme, if carried into operation, be a hindrance to Home Rule or an aid? In other words, can Home Rulers safely accept it? Upon the answer to the question our attitude towards this Bill must depend. That is the question which we would submit to our fellow-countrymen at the National Convention to be held shortly in Dublin; but we Members will, of course, be expected to express our opinion, after considering this Bill, for the guidance of the Convention. If this Bill does not give really effective control over these Departments, if it does not prove a workable scheme, and if its finance is unjust, then, if carried into law, it would certainly break down. . . . And we cannot take the responsibility of advising our people to accept any scheme which, in our honest judgment, we believe would be unworkable, because I am convinced that its breakdown will be believed by the people of England to be a proof of the incapacity of the Irish people for self-government. . . . All I can say for myself to-night

is that I personally am most anxious to find, if I can, in this scheme an instrument which, while admittedly it will not solve the Irish problem, will at anyrate remove some of those most glaring and palpable causes which keep Irishmen hopeless and discontented; and it is in that spirit that my colleagues and I will address ourselves to the serious consideration of the provisions of this Bill."

Now, fellow-countrymen, in that spirit I have addressed myself to the consideration of this Bill. In that spirit Irishmen all over the country have addressed themselves to the consideration of this Bill. In that spirit I invite you to address yourselves to that consideration. But, addressing myself in that spirit to that task, I have come to the conclusion absolutely that the scheme as it stands is utterly unworkable. The study of the printed Bill—and allow me to remark that I never had in my possession a print of the Bill in its final shape—the final and completed Bill, until after it was introduced in the House of Commons—the study of that Bill as printed has confirmed every objection that I made to the scheme on the first night. I instantly objected to the constitution of the Council. I objected to the finance of the scheme. I objected to the system of endeavouring to control the Departments through the instrumentality of Committees. I objected to the Chairmen of these Committees being selected by the Lord Lieutenant in the way provided in this Bill. And I objected to the extraordinary and unheard-of power given to the Lord Lieutenant, not merely to exercise a veto—I suppose no reasonable man would object to something in the way of a veto such as is known in every constitutional assembly in the world—but the extraordinary power of the Lord Lieutenant to take executive action on his own initiative in defiance of the Council. I objected further to the manner in which it was proposed to create an Education Department by the Lord Lieutenant without any consultation even with the Council at all.

By the constitution of this Council it is extremely doubtful to my mind whether the real feeling of the overwhelming mass of the Irish people would be truthfully

reflected in a workable majority on the Council, and there would be the greatest possible danger that the Council would constitute a sort of rival body to the Irish National party, which, as I have said, I believe to be the greatest weapon, with an organised country behind it, which Ireland has in her possession. The finance of this Bill is utterly inadequate. The system of control by the committees is unknown in any other assembly, except, indeed, in the County Council of London, where, I am told, it is on the verge of breaking down. It is unworkable. And the appointment of chairmen of committees by the Lord Lieutenant in the way provided in this Bill is utterly indefensible, whilst, as I have said, the veto of the Lord Lieutenant, as it is provided here, reduces Irish control over any department of Irish government to the level of an absolute farce. Under these circumstances I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to advise this Convention to reject this Bill.

Every one of the objections I have mentioned to you now I took on the first reading in the House of Commons. And one of the matters that has been seriously occupying my attention is this—as to whether it would be safe for us to allow the discussion on the Bill to proceed in the hope of obtaining amendments on all these points. Well, it is an anxious point this to decide, and I will be quite frank with you and tell you why I have decided it in the way I have indicated. There is one element in this Bill which in my judgment—and I speak only for myself—in my judgment is the most vital of all—namely, the proper constitution of the body. If the body were properly constituted, if it were the laying of a foundation on which afterwards we could rear a great building, I would not quarrel with the Bill if the powers in the first instance given to that body were comparatively limited and grudging. But if the constitution of the body is wrong nothing can be right. And I feel it my duty to tell you that I have reason to know that on that vital point, the constitution of the body, no amendment is possible, or would be accepted.

Now, that is what decided my mind, because even if

we got amendments on everything else—and for my part I don't believe we would—even if we got amendments on everything else, it would be a fatal thing to allow the Bill to pass if the constitution of the body were not right. And therefore I have settled the question, so far as my mind is concerned, that the wisest thing under the circumstances for us to do is to reject the Bill. Now, people may say it is very easy with a light heart to reject a measure of this kind, but what of the future? Well, I am not afraid of the future. What I say of the immediate future is this: The Liberal party must, once and for all, drop the Roseberyite idea of settling the Irish question. They must come back to the standard of Gladstone. People sometimes talk of what is called an alliance between the Irish party and the Liberal party.

The Irish party is an independent party. It is in alliance with no English party, and it never can be in alliance with any English party which does not put full Home Rule in the front of its political programme. We will go back to Parliament and will press on the Government the immediate fulfilment of their pledge to introduce at the end of this month of May a measure giving compulsory powers to the Estates Commissioners to reinstate the evicted tenants. We will press upon them the immediate fulfilment of their pledge to introduce this year a University Bill on the lines indicated by Mr Bryce. We will press upon them immediate legislation on the lines of our Land Bill amending the Act of 1903, which was carried by the support of the whole Government and the Liberal party on the second reading by an enormous majority. But in any case, whether they fulfil their pledges on these points or whether they do not, there is and there can be no alliance between the Irish party and the Liberal party until Home Rule, as we understand it, is back in the forefront of the Liberal programme. Ireland is strong enough, if she chooses, to compel a settlement of this question. If Ireland were really united, government on any other basis of this land would be an impossibility. I therefore to-day appeal to this Convention, and

through the Convention I appeal to Ireland, to recognise how much blame for the present situation is due to our own apathy and our own dissensions; and I appeal to Ireland at this moment to rally again to the National organisation and the National party and to show English statesmen that we are determined to achieve our rights. I repeat if Ireland is determined she can compel an early settlement of this question. But I say also, better wait for another generation rather than accept a measure which would end in disaster and disgrace.

For these reasons I advise this Convention to reject this Bill. For these reasons I beg to move the resolution which is in your hands and which I have read to you at the commencement of my speech.

THE IRISH NATIONAL DEMAND

Mansion House, Dublin, 4th September 1907.

It gives me the greatest possible pleasure to address this gathering. This great meeting of the citizens of Dublin is opportune and it is necessary. Recent events have made it essential that Ireland and the capital of Ireland should once more reiterate, and declare in perfectly unmistakable language, the national demand. That national demand, in plain and popular language, is simply this, that the government of every purely Irish affair shall be controlled by the public opinion of Ireland, and by that alone. We demand this self-government as a right. For us the Act of Union has no binding, moral or legal force. We regard it as our fathers regarded it before us, as a great criminal act of usurpation, carried by violence and by fraud; and we say that no lapse of time, and no mitigation of its details, can ever make it binding upon our honour or our conscience. Resistance to the Act of Union will always remain for us, so long as that Act lasts, a sacred duty, and the method of resistance will remain for us merely a question of expediency. There are men to-day—perfectly honourable and honest men—for whose convictions I have the utmost respect, who think that the method we ought to adopt is force of arms. Such resistance, I say here, as I have said more than once on the floor of the House of Commons, would be absolutely justifiable if it were possible. But it is not under present circumstances possible, and I thank God there are other means at our hands. The demand for National Self-Government is, therefore, founded by us, first of all, upon right, and we declare that no ameliorative reforms, no number of Land Acts, or Labourers Acts, or Education Acts, no redress of financial grievances, no material improvement or industrial

development, can ever satisfy Ireland until Irish laws are made and administered upon Irish soil by Irishmen.

But our claim to self-government does not rest solely upon historic right and title. It rests also, fellow-citizens, upon the failure of the British Government in Ireland for the last one hundred years, a failure which constitutes a record without a parallel in the history of civilisation. Judged by any test that the wit of man can devise the government of Ireland stands condemned.

Take the test of population. While in every civilised country in Europe the population has increased, while in England and Scotland it has increased in enormous proportions, in Ireland, in the last sixty years, it has diminished by one-half. Take the test of civil liberty. There has been a Coercion Act for every year since the Union was passed, and there is to-day in existence a law which enables the Lord Lieutenant, at his arbitrary discretion, by a stroke of the pen, to suspend trial by jury, personal liberty, freedom of discussion, and the right to public meeting all over Ireland. Take the test of religious liberty. Why, it has only been by slow and painful steps that the Catholics of Ireland, during the last century, have emerged from a state of absolute slavery and bondage, and even at the present moment, if anyone will take the trouble to look into the list of names of those who are employed in the great offices of State in Ireland and in all the departments in Ireland—and I go further and I say in the railways and great mercantile institutions of the country—it will be found that those who profess the religion of the great majority of the Irish people are still in an inferior position.

Take the test of the contentment of the people. There have been since the Union three insurrections, all of them suppressed in blood, with sacrifices untold in the prison cell and upon the scaffold, and at the end of it all to-day it is an admitted fact that the overwhelming majority of the Irish people are thoroughly disaffected and disloyal to English rule.

Take the test of the prosperity of Ireland. You know

the history of Irish famine, and it is not only the history of one great famine, which, as you know, swept hundreds of thousands of the people off the face of the earth, but you know it is the history of constantly-recurring famines every few years over a large portion of the west and north-west seaboard of the country.

Take the question of industrial development. What has been the history of Ireland under English rule? A history of industries deliberately suppressed by British Acts of Parliament, and not one finger lifted in the last hundred years to advance industrial prosperity. You know it is the history of more inefficient and more costly railway and other transit facilities than in almost any country of Europe. It is the history of waste land unreclaimed, of great river areas undrained, and of Irish forests disappearing or already gone.

And if you take the test of education, what is the history of the last hundred years? University education absolutely denied to the great mass of Irish youths, and primary education on a lower level to-day than in any civilised country in Europe, probably 50 per cent. behind it. And take two other tests.

Take the test of the cost of this government per head of the population in Ireland. The civil government of the country is double what it is in England, and three times what it is in Scotland. It is greater by far than in Belgium or Holland or the smaller countries of Europe. And taxation, which in England has gone steadily down, in Ireland has gone steadily up, and to-day we can see that in the last fifty years taxation per head of the population in Ireland has doubled, while taxation per head of the population in England has been diminished by one-half.

Now such a record as that, apart from any historic title, cries aloud for vengeance, and the result is that all classes of the Irish people are to-day dissatisfied with the history of their country. Did I say all classes? I ought perhaps to make an exception. It is true at any rate to say to-day, as Lecky said with reference to the Union, that the whole unbribed intellect of Ireland is against the British

Government. If there is one class which is an exception it is the class made up of the office-holders and the office-seekers.

Now how are we proposing to end this state of things? You have heard how much has been done already, especially in the last twenty-five years, to mitigate the sufferings of Ireland on the question of the land, and the labourers, and even on the question of education. But the doctrine that we hold is what I enumerated a few moments ago, namely, that none of these things, no amelioration of our condition by palliatives, can settle the Irish question, or can turn this into a prosperous and contented nation. We say that only can be done by Home Rule. I have, as have all my Parliamentary colleagues, the utmost sympathy with every effort at industrial revival, but I say here, without the slightest hesitation, I believe that until you have first freedom in the land you will never be industrially a prosperous country. I say that the one remedy is Home Rule. Now, it has been said recently that it would be a wise thing for the Nationalist representatives of Ireland, at this juncture, to give up the demand for Home Rule and to go back to the old demand for simple Repeal of the Union. I will not argue that to-night, but what I want to say is this: In 1886 Parnell accepted Gladstone's Bill in the name of the Irish nation, and his acceptance was endorsed by Irishmen in every part of the world.

Gladstone's Bill provided for a statutory Parliament with an Executive responsible to it. What I desire to say to-night—and it is, believe me, important that there should be no ambiguous language about this matter—what I say to-night to Englishmen is this, the Irish National party stand to-day in exactly the same position that Parnell stood. We have not changed our demand. Our demand remains to-day absolutely as it was when Parnell accepted the statutory Parliament with an Executive responsible to it.

Now, let me ask three questions, and give short answers to them. First, What are the prospects at this moment of the National cause? Secondly, How have they been affected

by recent events? And thirdly, What should be our methods and our policy in the immediate future? Let me say I utterly and completely disagree with those who take a gloomy, a pessimistic view of the prospects of the National cause at this moment. I am not here, at any-rate, to utter words of discouragement or of despair. On the contrary, I believe the prospects of the National cause at this moment are bright and promising on one condition, and that is that Ireland herself does her duty.

Let me for a moment ask you to consider some of what I may call outside conditions and influences which affect the Irish cause at this moment—influences apart from Ireland. First of all, it is an undoubted fact that the bitter hostility to Home Rule, which swayed so many of the people of England twenty years ago, is absolutely dead. Within the last few months vigorous and most costly efforts were made by the Unionists of this country to rouse an anti-Irish campaign in Great Britain by speeches, by the circulation of lying literature, and by all the machinery which was well known twenty years ago, by the circulation of bogus stories, of bogus outrages and so forth, and this campaign fell absolutely flat and was an absolute failure.

I believe for myself the great masses of the working people of Great Britain are not in their hearts hostile to Ireland or her fair demands. They are in this position: They are struggling for their rights themselves, and their time is occupied with their own affairs, and further than that they know very little about Ireland, and therefore they are indifferent and apathetic; but hostile, really hostile, to the fair demands of Ireland I do not believe the masses of the working people of Great Britain are at this moment. Many of the old inveterate enemies of Irish freedom—I will not mention names—amongst leading statesmen of England, have disappeared or are disappearing, and speaking of them now individually I give you my own individual opinion.

I say that the overwhelming majority of the present Liberal party in the House of Commons are in favour of a measure of Home Rule for Ireland. I am not speaking

now of the Government. I will deal with them in a sentence or two later on. Further than that the party of the future in England, the Labour party, is united as one man with us, and greatest perhaps of all the outside influences working in favour of Home Rule is the everyday experience of the House of Commons.

Every day the sittings of the House of Commons furnish an argument in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. There is a congestion of work there, growing rapidly day by day, which is showing the English people that if they do not lighten the load by sending local affairs home to Ireland, and probably to Scotland and to Wales, for management, representative institutions in England will sink beneath the burden. I tell you the everyday experience of the House of Commons constitutes argument in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, and it is being pressed upon the minds of Englishmen.

At the back of all that you have the opinions of all the self-governing Colonies, from the mouth of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, of Canada, and from the mouth of General Botha. Every self-governing colony at this moment has openly declared by Parliamentary resolutions, and by the speeches of their leaders, that they are in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. I say to you, these are all outside conditions and influences, but I say, if you had nothing else, and if you left Ireland's own efforts out of account altogether, these outside influences make it absolutely certain that in the ordinary course of events Home Rule for Ireland will come, and the influence of Ireland's own action at home will decide whether it will come soon or not. I said I had a word to say about the Government as a body. That Government is made up, three-quarters or more, of men who avowed themselves in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. And yet they have not introduced a measure of Home Rule for Ireland; but, on the contrary, they introduced a Bill which they declared themselves was not a substitute for Home Rule, and which we in this country did not think was even an instalment of Home Rule. What is the secret of it? The Government was formed before the General

Election took place, and Liberals little dreamed at the time the Government was formed how great and sweeping would be their victory at the polls, and they were seeking, from their own selfish motives, to bring into their net every influence they could, and they included in the Government certain Roseberyite gentlemen who publicly avowed they would not give Home Rule to Ireland. I may say, for myself, that, in my opinion, if the General Election had taken place before the formation of the Government these gentlemen would not have found the position they have in the Government; or if they did they would certainly have held their tongue about Home Rule for Ireland. But Ministers made that fatal mistake, and pledged themselves that no Home Rule Bill, in the sense in which we understand the phrase, would be introduced during this Parliament, and accordingly they introduced the Irish Councils Bill.

Now, we did our utmost to extend that Bill and make it worth acceptance, at anyrate as an instalment, but when we came to the point, when we found we could get them to go no further in the direction we wanted, we then felt it our duty to allow the Bill to be introduced and to let the Irish people see exactly how they stood with reference to this Government. Its production and its fate will prove, in my opinion, probably a blessing in disguise. Certainly the fate of that measure has shown the Government the impossibility of satisfying Ireland with anything short of real Home Rule, and it has also made this certain, that Home Rule, and not Devolution, will be the Irish policy put before the electors at the next General Election. If that Bill had been accepted here as an instalment, and if it had passed, as it would have passed, the House of Commons, it most undoubtedly would have been rejected by the House of Lords, and then it—that is, the Irish Councils Bill—would have definitely passed into the programme of the Liberal party as their Irish policy, whereas now, after what has happened, Home Rule, and full Home Rule, must be the policy of the Liberal party before the electors at the next General Election.

We are near a General Election. My own estimate is that about early in 1909 there will be a General Election. The House of Lords are mutilating Government measures, and it will be impossible for the Government to avoid appealing to the country on that question, and from my point of view the sooner the General Election comes the better.

I think it is our duty to take care to declare plainly to the Liberal party that when the election comes Home Rule must be put into the front of their programme, and if it is allied with the question of reform of the House of Lords, then, probably, all the better for Ireland. Let me ask how are we to effect this? I suggest three ways—work in Ireland, work in Parliament, and work in Great Britain. What I mean by work in Ireland is unity in the national ranks and a vigorous agitation and organisation. What I mean by work in the House of Commons is this, not withdrawal from the House of Commons, but vigorous, active and independent work. I believe it is our duty next session to place the Irish demand plainly before the House of Commons and the English people. I was asked the other day by one of our young critics how exactly, and when exactly, we would raise this question in Parliament. I answered, "That depends on circumstances," and I answered further that even if I knew exactly at this moment when and how we would raise it I would think it very foolish to make the announcement six months in advance. This you may take as assured—that the Irish National question will be raised in the next session by us, and in unmistakable fashion. The third way in which we can force the Irish question into the forefront before and at the next election is by work in Great Britain. I believe the time is ripe for the opening and continuing of a propaganda in Great Britain. I believe we must take the field against the traducers of our country, not by speeches alone, but by literature, and thus try to bring the true facts of the situation before the minds and hearts of those English working men, who, as I said before, I believe, are not actuated by any bitterness of feeling or trace of hostility to Ireland. If within the next six or twelve months the

movement be spread in Ireland, in Parliament, and in Great Britain, I think you may rest assured that Home Rule will be in the forefront of all the political questions of the day, and definitely placed before the electors in every constituency where an election will take place when the General Election comes.

Now in this work I invite the assistance of every Irishman who believes in the right of Ireland to govern herself. In the ranks of the United Irish League and the Irish party I ask for unity of action and of policy. I ask for an united and organised Ireland here at home, and to those of my fellow-countrymen who think our views are not extreme enough, I would say just this, that they also, following their own political methods, may do a great work for Irish self-government if they direct their energies towards attacking the common enemy. I mean, when I say the common enemy, English ascendancy in Ireland, and let them not seek to interfere with or thwart other Irishmen who just as honestly are seeking the same ends by different methods. Above all—and these are my last words—remember this, that though we may obtain, and probably will obtain, further land reform and educational reform and other advantages for our country by the way, the end and aim of all our policy and all our action is the freedom of our country.

THE DESTRUCTION OF IRISH INDUSTRIES

Maryborough, 13th October 1907.

OF all proofs of misgovernment under the Union, none is more conclusive than the industrial stagnation of Ireland for the last hundred years. The emigration from Ireland has been appalling. It has no parallel, remember, in any other civilised country in the world. Every other civilised country has increased in population in the last sixty years. In Ireland the population has gone down by one-half; and it is still going on. Why is that? Fellow-countrymen, the people are leaving Ireland because they cannot find the means of employment and of life within the country. Agriculture is and will always remain the chief industry of Ireland. I do not believe myself that Ireland will ever become, as England is to-day, a great manufacturing country. But I do not regret that. It has never entered into my dream of a happy and prosperous and free Ireland that the country should be studded over by these great manufacturing towns such as we see in England, filled with anæmic women and debilitated men, working out their very hearts in factories of various kinds.

But at the same time every sensible man must realise that agriculture alone cannot provide employment for the whole people. Even if the great ranches were broken up, as, please God, they soon will be, and even if they are used, as far as they go, for new holdings, and for changing uneconomic holdings into economic ones, with the necessary consequences of an increase of tillage and an increase of employment—even then I say that emigration will not stop unless by industries in the towns an outlet is provided for what is called the surplus population from the land. Now, no such outlet is to be found to-day in Ireland. The industrial condition of Ireland is stagnation and decay.

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The first point I want to make is this—that that condition of industrial stagnation is not a natural condition; it is not the result of natural causes; it is not the result of geographical position; it is not the result of want of resources in this country; above all, it is not the result of want of inherent capacity for industrial pursuits amongst the people.

This condition is an artificial one which has been produced as the result of the deliberate policy of England, pursued for at least two hundred years, to destroy the industries of this country. Now, that is no exaggeration. Mr Arthur Balfour, in a remarkable speech made some years ago in England, admitted that England had deliberately destroyed Irish industries. History proves it. So far back as the middle of the seventeenth century England began to legislate to destroy Irish industries. At that time, and after, Irish industries were beating England in her own markets. But England, as soon as she realised that, instantly proceeded to impose duties upon Irish goods, in turn upon every Irish manufacture, in order to destroy them. The great woollen industry of Ireland was destroyed by an Act of the English Parliament. Previous to that the cattle industry had been destroyed; and when they were no longer able to export live stock from Ireland, the Irish people commenced to make preserved meat and bacon, and, as soon as that was prosperous, that industry was attacked by England and similarly destroyed. Every industry in turn to which the Irish people had recourse was dealt with in the same way. Cotton, glass, iron, hats, sugar refining, shipbuilding—every industry to which Ireland turned was destroyed by England by the imposition of prohibitive duties or by the closing of ports. The Colonial and Indian markets were closed absolutely against Ireland, and prohibitive duties, as I have said, were placed upon all Irish manufactures to keep them out of the English markets.

Now, these industries, in this way, were for the time being strangled. But the remarkable thing is that the inherent capacity of the Irish people for industrial pur-

suits was not strangled. It continually sought an outlet; and the very moment that Ireland got a chance these industries began to revive. The very moment that Grattan achieved the independence of the Irish Parliament, Irish industries revived all over the land. One of the most remarkable books written recently about Ireland contains this passage:

“The Irish Commons did much to foster new prosperity. They could not spend huge sums of money like England in promoting trades and manufactures, but the sums they did spend were wisely allotted. The industrial aspect of Ireland rapidly changed. Ruined factories sprang into life, and new ones were built; the old corn-mills, which had ceased working so long, were everywhere busy; the population of the towns began to increase; the standard of living among the artisan class rose; and even the condition of the peasantry changed slightly for the better. Dublin, instead of being sunk in decay, assumed the appearance of a thriving town. In fact, the independent Irish legislature set itself to promote the material prosperity of the country in every possible way, and there is no doubt its efforts had much to say to the really surprising commercial progress which was made from 1780 until the years immediately preceding the Union. The Irish fisheries became the envy and admiration of Great Britain, and agriculture increased rapidly. Various manufactures in Ireland began to thrive; the manufacture of hats, of boots and shoes, of candles and soap, of blankets and carpets, of woollens, of printed cottons and fustians, of tabinets and of glass, all sprang into importance, while the linen manufacture, which had decayed during the American War, quickly revived, and in ten years the exports of various kinds of linen doubled.”

My argument, then, is that though England succeeded in strangling our industries that was such an artificial state of things, and the Irish people had such an inherent capacity for industrial pursuits, that the very moment Ireland got a free hand in her free Parliament these industries all revived.

But, fellow-countrymen, let me pursue the matter further. From the day the Union was carried these industries went rapidly down the hill. Stagnation and decay spread over Ireland. Industrial pursuits from that day to this have gone down, and they are going down at

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this moment. Let me read a few of the latest figures. Here is an extract from the report of the last Census Commission for Ireland:

“According to the Census returns, the number of persons engaged in Ireland, in the production and distribution of textile fabrics, has fallen away very considerably during the past thirty years. The totals recorded were, for 1871, 193,864, and for 1881, 129,787. In 1891 there was practically no change at 129,884, but in 1901 the numbers employed had fallen to 109,588. Referring to the returns for the later year, the Commissioners observe—“In this marked decline of over fifteen and a half per cent. the males diminished by 8,864 and the females to the extent of 11,432. Looking at the principal textile manufactures, we find that by far the most important industry in the country, viz., the flax and linen industry, has lost over 17,000, nearly one-fifth of its workers, while those employed in the manufacture of woollen goods have suffered a corresponding reduction.”

Therefore, the decay of Irish industries is going on to this moment; and, further, it is not confined, as your enemies would have England believe, to the south and the west, to the thriftless Nationalists and Catholics of the south and west and centre of Ireland. Here is proof conclusive in the report of the Commissioners of the last census that the industry which has suffered most of all in the last thirty years is the linen industry in prosperous Ulster. Now, unfortunately, the spirit of England has not altered to this moment. We have had quite recently, within the last few weeks, a proof of that assertion. You remember what occurred in Kynoch's Cordite Factory in Arklow, where not, I would say, through the deliberate intention of the heads of the Government, but through the action of the permanent officials of the Government, who remain on, no matter what party is in office—owing to their inveterate spirit of hostility to Ireland that industry in the little fishing town of Arklow, which employs six or seven hundred hands, in which half a million of money has been spent for the last fourteen years, would have been absolutely crushed out of existence were it not for the action of the Irish party and myself in the House of Commons.

Take another instance of the spirit of England on this question of Irish Industries. They are building in Dublin a College of Science, and will it be believed that the Government of the country is bringing stone at enormous cost from Portland in England—bringing Portland stone to put the facings on that building, when everybody knows that in the west and north of Ireland—ay, and in Stradbally—there is as good, and better, stone than this English stone. We have protested against it, and I hope we will stop it. I only mention these instances to prove my statement that, whatever the view of the Government of the day may be, the spirit of English permanent officialism is to-day as hostile to Irish industrial development as at any time for the last two hundred years.

Well, now, my own personal conviction is that you will never have a really successful industrial development in Ireland, you will never really stop emigration in Ireland by any means, except under the fostering care of a native Parliament and a native Government. But, fellow-countrymen, that is no reason why we should not do our best. That is no reason why we should fold our arms and do nothing. On the contrary, it is our duty to press upon the Government of the day, by exposure on the floor of the House of Commons, by votes in the Division Lobby, by appeals to the masses of the English working men—to press upon the Government of the day those steps which we consider they can take to improve the industrial condition of Ireland. And, besides, we should do, individually and collectively, all that it is in our power to do to revive Irish industries, and believe me, if we all act together we can do something.

There was published the other day a most remarkable minority report from the Commission which has been inquiring into the working of the Agricultural Department in Dublin. That report in substance amounts to this: that while the Agricultural Department, no doubt, was, in certain respects, doing good work, and might do better work if better organised, at the same time that it could never adequately deal with the question of industrial re-

vival. And this report recommended the creation in Ireland, on the same lines as the Congested Districts Board, of a Development Department, which should be independent of the Agricultural Department, independent of Dublin Castle, independent of the English Parliament, and responsible to Irish public opinion, and elected by the Irish people themselves. The report recommended that this Department should be given a large sum of money, one million a year for twenty years, and that that money should be devoted entirely to the initiation, the fostering, and the aiding of new and infant industries in Ireland.

Now, not even the strictest political economist, not even the most extreme Free Trader, can honestly object to that proposal on the grounds of its being Protection. Some of the greatest political economists of the day—John Stuart Mill and others—have declared that temporary aid for new and infant industries is consistent with the general principle of Free Trade. But, apart from that, we have a special claim, because we had our industries, and they were destroyed. All we ask is fair play. Let these industries be fostered and encouraged, and then, once they are on their feet again, as they were when England interfered with them, we would ask for no assistance, but would be prepared and able, as we were in the past, to compete with any English industries in the markets of the world.

Another declaration of a most remarkable kind, bearing upon this matter, was made by Mr Childers in his draft report for the Financial Relations Commission some years ago. Strange to say, it has been largely lost sight of. Mr Childers recommended that one way of making restitution to Ireland for portion of the money which admittedly had been robbed from us during the last hundred years would be to consolidate all the railways in Ireland, to put them under the management of a local representative Irish authority, to compulsorily reduce railway rates and charges for a certain number of years, and for the Government during those years to guarantee the shareholders against loss. After all, transit is at the bottom of the industrial

question. Industries everywhere are handicapped by dear, slow, and inadequate means of transit.

We, I believe, have the least enterprising railways in the whole world. Freights and charges on these railways are higher than in England, far higher than they are on the Continent of Europe. Cheap and rapid means of transit are essential to any real industrial development. I do not desire to say more upon this question of the railways, because, as you know, a Royal Commission is sitting in Dublin investigating this matter; and, if I may be allowed to say so, is doing magnificent work in pointing out the direction in which the railways can be put upon a footing which would promote industrial development. All I will say is, that I have never yet heard Mr Childers's proposal really answered. It has the authority of Mr Childers himself; it has the authority and support of that great English economist, Sir Robert Giffen; and, fellow-countrymen, in addition to that I am glad to be able to say that that proposal of Mr Childers finds a place in the printed programme and objects of the United Irish League, which from the very first demanded that some at least of the money going in over-taxation out of Ireland should be used amongst other things in cheapening railway rates and charges, and assisting Irish industries. So much for what the Government may do, what we ought to press them to do.

Now what can we do ourselves? It is a question of a little thought, and of a little unity of action amongst the people. Here is a circular that we have recently issued from the United Irish League Offices. We have arranged in Dublin in connection with that office an Industrial Bureau, and we hope to work that all through Ireland, so as to induce the people to give a chance to their own industries. Let me read the circular.

"Members of the United Irish League should use Irish manufactured goods.

"Branches are required to exercise their influence in every locality to secure that in the giving of local contracts a decided preference should be given by elected public bodies to goods of Irish manufacture.

"That the local public bodies be requested to insist that the

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Irish trade mark should be stamped on all goods offered as Irish made.

"That at every meeting held in furtherance of the National campaign, now being inaugurated, a resolution dealing with the promotion of Irish industries should be given a prominent place on the programme of the meeting, and, as far as practical, sub-committees of the organisation should be appointed to give effect to the resolution.

"That deputations should be appointed in each locality to urge on shopkeepers the necessity of stocking Irish goods.

"That individual members of the organisation be requested to give their custom to shopkeepers who stock Irish goods.

"That branches be requested to have displayed in their meeting-rooms the names of shopkeepers and merchants who stock Irish manufactured goods in their districts, and that they instruct their secretaries to send to every householder in each district the names of such shopkeepers and merchants as give preference to goods of Irish manufacture."

The traders in each district in Ireland will be supplied, on application to the Industrial Bureau of the United Irish League at their offices in Dublin, with a full list of Irish manufacturers; and, finally, we invite the public everywhere to enter into communication with this Bureau, and to assist us in inducing the Irish people themselves to give a chance to their own manufacturers by giving a preference to Irish goods. Now, what is the moral of all this I have been saying to you?

The moral is this—that the industrial decay of Ireland is the greatest of all condemnations of English rule in this land; that Ireland is a country with great natural resources; that the Irish people have proved by their past history that they have an aptitude, and an inherent capacity for industrial pursuits; that Ireland was once a country almost as prosperous industrially as England herself; but as soon as she became a serious rival in her markets, and the markets of the world, those industries were totally suppressed by the English Parliament; that Ireland, during the eighteen years that she had her own Parliament, revived those industries, and that those industries died away again from the very hour that self-government was taken from our people. Now, what answer has any English statesman of any party to give to

that argument for Home Rule? There is no argument in reply; and I, therefore, to-day put forward this one point in the Home Rule case, that the industrial decay of Ireland alone, if there was no other argument, would be conclusive proof of the justice and the necessity of our demand.

EXTRAVAGANCE OF IRISH ADMINISTRATION

At Drumkeerin, 27th October 1907.

WE in Ireland are cursed with the most inefficient and, at the same time, the most costly Government in the whole world. At recent meetings that I have addressed I have dwelt upon the inefficiency of the Government, and how in every department it is a bad Government. To-day I ask you to bear with me while I very, very shortly deal with the question of the cost of the Government. This Ireland is a poor country. Our Government should be run on modest and economical lines. We have no money to spare in Ireland, to waste in luxury or empty pomp and display. And yet it is an indisputable fact that the government of this poor country of ours is modelled on lines of extravagance unknown in any similar country in the whole world. This is the case from top to bottom. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who occupies the position of Governor of a Colony, is paid £20,000 a year. That is to say exactly double the salary that is paid to the President of the United States of America. The judges' salaries in this country are far and away higher than the salaries of the judges in America. The number of public officials is altogether out of proportion to the population and resources of the country, and their salaries are also ridiculously extravagant; and so, right down from the Lord Lieutenant to the policeman, every department of the Irish Government is overmanned and extravagantly paid. Yes, except one.

There is one exception. The only department of the Government in this country that is starved and has been deliberately starved by England is education. The only Government officials who are really badly-paid men in

Ireland to-day are the teachers, the men of all others who ought to be the best paid, and who have upon their shoulders the greatest responsibility for the future welfare of our nation.

We are ruled, fellow-countrymen, as you know, by a system of Boards or Departments, and these Boards or Departments cost every year between seven and eight millions of money. The whole Civil Government of Belgium, with a population far larger than the population of Ireland, is run for about one-half that amount; and ever since the Financial Relations Commission sat—the Commission, remember, which declared that Ireland was over-taxed to the extent of nearly three millions a year—ever since then the revenue from taxation raised in Ireland every year has increased, but at the same time the money spent on the rotten Government of Ireland has kept pace with it. Now let me give you the figures, for it will be something for you to bring home with you and think upon. In 1893-4 the revenue raised in Ireland was £7,568,649. In 1906-7 the revenue raised was £9,490,000, or an increase of about two millions; but the expenditure on Irish Government more than kept pace with it. In 1893-4 the cost of running these rotten Castle Boards was £5,602,555. In last year, 1906-7, the cost of running that Government had risen to £7,678,000, or an increase of more than two millions. Now, one result of this is very strange. It is that although Ireland is paying more in taxes every year than she was at the time of the Financial Relations Commission, what is called her Imperial contribution, that is her contribution to the outside expenses of the Empire, has decreased, so that England or the Empire does not benefit by the present system, and if we go on as at present, at the present rate of increased expenditure in Ireland, and if the taxes on sugar, on tea, and other commodities be decreased, as is almost certain, the result will be that what is called the Imperial contribution from Ireland will almost disappear, that is, after paying all the absurd and criminal extravagance of this rotten Government there may be practically no margin left at all out of the Irish

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revenue towards Imperial expenditure. Therefore, the Empire does not benefit by the extravagant cost, nor does Ireland gain, because, as the Government in this country becomes more expensive, it becomes, if anything, more inefficient and bad.

Fellow-countrymen, I have prepared some figures in the form of a tabulated statement, which will be of value when published, and I will hand them to the Press and ask them to incorporate them in the report of my speech.

These figures are as follows:

IRISH REVENUE.

	1893-4.	1906-7.
Income Tax . . .	£653,417	£1,102,000
Death Duties . . .	473,927	691,000
Stamps . . .	248,600	300,000
Tea, etc. . .	581,062	1,336,000
Tobacco . . .	1,174,642	1,291,000
Alcohol . . .	3,512,071	3,554,000
Non Tax . . .	134,828	126,000
Post Office . . .	752,293	1,060,000
Crown Lands . . .	37,800	30,000
	<hr/> £7,568,649	<hr/> £9,490,000

EXPENDITURE ON IRISH GOVERNMENT.

	1893-4.	1906-7.
Law and Police . . .	£2,162,138	2,208,000
Dublin Castle . . .	862,438	1,035,500
Education . . .	1,141,906	1,426,000
Local Grants . . .	643,203	1,800,000
Post Office . . .	792,810	1,209,000
	<hr/> £5,602,555	<hr/> £7,678,500

In these figures what are called "Local Grants" include Rates on Government property, Railways, Hospitals, Irish Development Grant, Exchequer grants, and payments to Local Taxation Account and other accounts.

So that since the Financial Relations Commission we pay in taxation £1,921,351 a year more, and the Irish Government costs £2,075,945 a year more now. That is a monstrous and extravagant and demoralising waste.

One-half of it would be ample.

How is this money spent? You have in this country an army of useless and overpaid officials—it is calculated there are in Ireland 100,000 officials, and a recent moderate estimate published goes to show that these 100,000 officials receive about three million pounds a year in the shape of pay, pensions and gratuities. That is to say, that of every £2 supposed to be spent on the Government of Ireland nearly one-half is pocketed by an employe of the bureaucracy.

Now, by comparison with England and Scotland, this expenditure is monstrous and incredible. In 1886 Mr Gladstone declared that the cost of government per head of the population of England was only one-half what it was in Ireland.

Last year, according to the figures, the civil government of Scotland only cost five and a half millions, whereas it cost well over seven and a half millions in Ireland. The judicial system in Ireland costs £200,000 a year more than the judicial system in Scotland, and the Irish police cost more than three times the police of Scotland, although the population of the two countries is about the same, and although the criminal statistics show there is considerably less crime to be dealt with in Ireland than in Scotland. The one item alone in which the Scotch Government is more expensive than the Irish Government is in the Department of Education.

I repeat again that, whilst the Irish Government is extravagant in every other respect, it is mean and niggardly and inefficient in the matter of payment for the education of the Irish people. If we compare the cost of the Irish Government with the cost of foreign nations, what do we find? I have taken out the cost of the civil government of practically every country in Europe, and find that it is higher, this cost of Irish government, than any of them. It is far higher than Norway, Holland, France, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Roumania, Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, and, in fact, it may with absolute truth

be said Ireland, probably the poorest nation in Europe, pays more for her government than any other nation. And what a government! It promotes neither peace, prosperity nor contentment.

And remember that every penny of this cost is paid by us. We hear a great deal of talk about the British Treasury and of British grants. The British Treasury is the purse controlled by England, into which our taxation is poured. You hear of free grants for Ireland; for railways, relief of distress, and other things. We contribute more than we get back every year. Every penny of money "granted," as it is called, for these purposes, which Englishmen talk of as "British money," is paid by Ireland herself. Unfortunately, under the present system no one in this country has any interest in economising in the Government, because every penny economised in the Government, under the present system, goes, not to the Irish people at all, but back into the British Treasury, and hence there is no one, under the present system, interested in keeping down the expenditure.

Now, what has been England's system of rule? England has maintained in the past this wasteful and extravagant system of government in order that she might attempt to subdue the national spirit of Ireland by a wholesale system of bribery, and bribery, remember, carried out, as I have shown you, not by her own money, but by the money of our own people, whom she is endeavouring to bribe. Can, I ask—and this is the moral of my speech—can a more powerful argument for Home Rule be conceived? If Ireland were self-governed she could easily be governed as cheaply as Belgium or any of the small nations of Europe. She could easily be governed at one-half the present expenditure; and if the present revenue were maintained by her government, we would have millions for the development of our country, for fostering industries, for housing its people, for education, and for promoting generally the happiness and prosperity of our people.

Why, some of you may ask me, do I emphasise all these

things, which are known and must be familiar to every intelligent man who is listening to me. The answer is, that we are at the beginning of a great Home Rule campaign, and we are putting on foot a great propaganda, not only in this country, but in Great Britain. We have arrived at a position in the Home Rule movement now when what is chiefly wanted, in Great Britain at anyrate, are knowledge and information about the Irish question, and we feel it our duty to put these arguments plainly before the masses of the people of Great Britain, who, at anyrate, and I can say it truthfully of the mass of the working people, are not hostile to Ireland to-day or to Home Rule.

Do not believe the croakers who tell you that the future is black. My memory can go back for nearly thirty years of Irish public work, and over and over again during that period I have remembered a time when, owing to some temporary delay, faint hearts or rash heads have induced men to say, "Oh, we did not get all we wanted last year or the year before; therefore let us stop at home at Manorhamilton or Drumkeerin." If, fellow-countrymen, their advice had been taken, where would the cause of Ireland and you be to-day? It is a faint heart that repines and loses courage because of disappointments and set-backs. The men who are in earnest and have the truest form of courage are those who set their faces as flint against delay or disappointment, to whom a set-back means not a rout or demoralisation but an incentive to further united action. I appeal to you, therefore, to follow the example of those who went before you during the past thirty years. Steady your ranks, and let all the world know that Lough Gill will be dried up before this great county will be content to fold its arms and give up the struggle for national liberty.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN IRELAND

Birr, 10th November 1907.

REV. CHAIRMAN and fellow-countrymen, after the unfortunate Irish Councils Bill was rejected by Ireland, it was stated by English politicians, some of them to be found in all English parties, that the Irish people had grown careless and apathetic about Home Rule. It was said by a number of people here at home in Ireland, some of whom called themselves Nationalists, that the Irish people had grown tired in this fight, and were about to disband their forces and give up the struggle. My colleagues, and those who had gone through thirty years of political warfare, with varying fortune, sometimes successful, oftener with defeat, we knew very well that the heart of Ireland was sound on the question of Home Rule, and we knew that the people who had faced, and had borne, and had overcome, the defeats and disappointments of the last thirty years were not going, in a moment of impatience and despondency, to abandon the weapons which had won so much for them since Parnell organised the movement. I took the liberty, in the name of the Irish party, of answering our critics and opponents by saying that we would appeal to the free verdict of the mass of the Irish people themselves, and we commenced, immediately after Parliament rose, a great series of Home Rule meetings in every part of Ireland—north, south, east and west. I myself attended as many of these meetings as it was possible for me to attend, and I have witnessed these meetings week by week increasing in enthusiasm and in numbers, and I congratulate you to-day on the assembly of one of the most magnificent meetings, in its representative character and vast proportions, that I have ever witnessed at any time in any part of Ireland.

Now I ask the attention of our opponents to the character of these meetings. What is it that has brought together from every part of this and the neighbouring counties such a vast gathering? Is it merely the Land Question? The Land Question is not yet settled. We know we are near the settlement, and know the methods that will bring that settlement about. We know that we are on the eve of the break-up of the great ranches. We know how much the future of our race depends on the settlement of this question; but it is not the Land Question that brings this mighty mass of people together. Is it the Education Question? No; though in every phase that deserves attention, and the self-sacrificing attention of every Irishman. It is not any particular, any individual grievance you are assembled here to-day to give testimony to. It is that all-embracing, that undying devotion to the cause of self-government, of making Ireland a free nation. There are here assembled old and young, there are some who remember O'Connell; old men who were through the Land League struggle and suffered for Ireland, and young men just coming to years of manhood, who have been reading of the times of their fathers. All have come together at this meeting to let England know that no matter what material grievances may be mitigated, or remedied, the Irish people will never give peace or ease to any British Government until they have vested in the hands of Irishmen the power of governing Ireland and of managing their own affairs.

Now, at these meetings I have been addressing, I devoted myself in turn to each one of the great arguments for Home Rule, and in order that these arguments should be put plainly before Ireland and England I have taken up one argument in each speech. To-day let me briefly dwell on the question of the administration of justice in Ireland. The first essential of a free and well-ordered country is respect for the law and confidence in the administration of justice, and if in any country you find a deep-rooted and widespread disaffection to the law, and a rooted distrust in the administration of justice, it argues

either that the people are a benighted race, utterly unfit for freedom or civilisation, which is not the case of Ireland, or else that the government under which these people live is a wicked and intolerable oppression. The idea which used to be common that Irishmen were endowed with a double dose of original sin, and the idea which was given expression to by the late Lord Salisbury, that the Irish were a race like Hottentots, unfit for free institutions, and incapable of understanding the meaning of the words law and order and justice, have been completely exploded, and I say there is no man in any part of England who dare make such a statement now, and yet, admittedly, there is to-day a rooted and almost universal distrust in the administration of justice in Ireland. This distrust is the surest and greatest of all marks of bad government, and is the greatest of all arguments in favour of Home Rule. No country can be free, no people can be contented, where the law is generally held in disesteem and disrepute, and the administration of the law is generally suspected. Is that the case with Ireland? I do not suppose that anybody will deny it.

Let me give one or two startling proofs from our own experience of how the people distrust the administration of justice, and how that distrust is admitted by statesmen of all parties. Let me recall to you an incident that will prove this. In the year 1888 a Bill was introduced in Parliament for England enabling prisoners to be examined and to give evidence on their own behalf. That was demanded by the public opinion of England in the interests of prisoners; but the public opinion of Ireland unanimously refused to have it extended to this country, because of their rooted objection to the way that justice was administered. One of the most distinguished Unionist lawyers in England—Sir Henry James—on the 22nd March 1888, on the second reading of the Criminal Evidence Bill, used these remarkable words:

“He did not think it possible to assert that the conduct of criminal cases in Ireland was the same as in England. Anyone who watched the conduct of criminal cases in England knew

that no prosecuting counsel ever thought of exercising any ingenuity to secure a conviction. The judge was always careful that no prosecuting counsel should for a moment exceed his duty. He hoped, and believed, that was the state of things in Ireland; but he was not quite sure that in some class of cases there would not be an acuter phase of forensic rivalry than would be displayed in this country, so that the efficacious principle might not be the same in Ireland as in England. Therefore, this Bill should not be extended to Ireland."

Could there be a more damning condemnation of British rule in Ireland?

The late Lord Russell (then Sir Charles Russell), on the 22nd March 1888, said in the same debate:

"In Ireland, rightly or wrongly, under the existing system, a widespread distrust of the administration of the law was unquestionably felt, and it would be intensified if this Bill were extended to Ireland."

Let me take another, a more startling and dramatic proof of the utter distrust of the administration of justice in Ireland.

I suppose you all remember the case of Sergeant Sheridan? In that case a number of respectable young men were suddenly arrested on a charge of committing a most horrible and brutal offence—cattle-maiming—an offence abhorrent to the nature of any decent man, and an offence which, thank God, is especially abhorrent to the nature of the Irish people. They were tried for this offence and convicted, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for an offence committed by Sheridan. Now, fellow-countrymen, it was admitted afterwards that they were innocent. The Government publicly admitted they were innocent, and they gave them some small compensation; and it was admitted that the crime had really been committed by the very man on whose evidence they were convicted—Sergeant Sheridan.

Do not mistake my point. I am not making any point about wrong conviction or miscarriage of justice—miscarriages of justice must happen, and do happen occasionally in nearly every country. My point is this: one of these innocent men pleaded guilty to the offence with

which he was charged. One of those men who it was admitted afterwards was innocent; he was a decent, respectable young boy, charged before the country with this horrible offence, but he was advised by his counsel and solicitor that he was certain to be convicted, and so, distrustful of the administration of justice, and of the tribunal before which he appeared, he pleaded guilty to an offence of which he was innocent. It would be impossible for anybody to produce a more dramatic proof of the truth of the statement that there is a deep-rooted and widespread distrust in, and suspicion of, the law and the administration of it in Ireland. But as to that it is unnecessary to argue.

What is the origin of this distrust? That is the important question. It springs, no doubt, to some extent from the fact that the laws under which we live in Ireland are foreign laws, made by a foreign Parliament. It springs also largely from the fact that many of these criminal laws are not only tyrannical and oppressive, but are special laws for Ireland, that could not be passed for England. But most of all this distrust springs from the manner in which the criminal laws are administered in Ireland, and from the character of the tribunals which administer them. Foreign laws coming to Ireland, as Gladstone said, "in foreign garb," can never command the respect of the people. It is the same all over the world. Do you think Englishmen would respect laws made in France by a French Parliament, in which the Englishmen were only as one to six? Do you think the Australians or Canadians would respect laws made in London? But these laws of ours are not only foreign-made laws, but many of the criminal laws are tyrannical, oppressive and exceptional, enacted specially for Ireland, which were not, and never could have been, enacted for England. To prove that, I need not go far back. It would be easy to show how in past times the Law of Treason was far more oppressive in Ireland than in England. It would be easy to refer to the code of the Whiteboy Acts, one of the most oppressive codes ever enacted, and unknown in Great Britain.

But it is unnecessary to go to the past; it is sufficient for us to know that there has been a Coercion Act for Ireland for every year since the Union, and at this very moment, although there is a Liberal Government in power, pledged to govern Ireland, according to Irish ideas, and according to democratic ideas, there is in existence a perpetual, a permanent Coercion Act, under which to-morrow, at the will of a single individual, all our most cherished rights and liberties could be suppressed. To-morrow, by a scratch of the pen, the Lord Lieutenant could deprive you of the right of public meeting, of your right of trial by jury, call into existence as a tribunal to try you two Removables, paid servants of his, who must either obey his orders or lose their office. I think I need say no more to show you that these criminal laws are not only foreign, but exceptional, and oppressive and made specially for Ireland.

But the real reason, after all, for distrust of the law is to be found in the fact that the whole criminal law of Ireland is administered on a different system and in a different spirit from that which prevails, and is administered, in England. From the days of the trial of O'Connell, trial by jury in the case of political offences has been little better than what Lord Denman described it:

“A mockery, a delusion, and a snare.”

In political or semi-political cases trial by jury is rendered a ghastly farce by the deliberate packing of juries by the Crown, and has been turned into that by successive Governments, Tory or Liberal. This practice poisons the very fountains of justice, and is unknown in England. One of the greatest judges who sat on the English Bench—Sir James Fitz-James Stephens—in his great work on the *History of the Criminal Law*, says:

“The Crown possesses what is nearly equivalent to a right of peremptory challenge, the power to stand aside. This practically is a matter of hardly any importance in England. In the course of my experience I do not remember more than two occasions in which there were any considerable number of challenges.”

That is the English practice. What is the Irish? Lord Ashbourne, the late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, in the House of Lords, in March 1887, said:

“It was common at assizes in Ireland, as he had seen it himself, to have fifty, sixty, eighty, ninety and one hundred persons ordered to stand by, in order to get a jury that could be relied on.”

And the organ of the Unionists, the *Daily Express*, wrote, in March 1887:

“The times demand plain speaking. Trial by jury for political or semi-political offences has ever been more or less of a pretence and make-believe in Ireland down to the present time. The Crown has succeeded in asserting the law by such an arrangement of the jury system as would secure the presence on the jury of men on whom the Crown officers could rely.”

And so the practice has gone on. One Government may pack more than another; but the mischief is done, and the distrust of administration of justice is universal and deep-rooted.

One other point: those who are called on to administer the law ought to be above suspicion. They are in England.

In England men are appointed to the Bench for their professional fitness and qualities; in Ireland, as we know, under successive Governments, men are appointed to the Bench simply for political services; and the more bitter partisan a man is—the more outspoken an enemy he is to the rights of the people—the more certain he has been, in the past, to find his way to the Bench. In England, when a politician is promoted to the Bench, except in the rarest cases, he leaves his politics behind him; but in Ireland, all through the century, and down to this very moment, the Irish people are familiar with the political judge, the partisan on the Bench, with the inevitable result that the mass of the people have no confidence whatever in the impartiality of the tribunal. Now I need not go back to the past for an illustration. Only the other day the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, in open court, attacked the Attorney-General because he did not prosecute certain prominent politicians. I exceedingly regret that

the Attorney-General did not respectfully ask his lordship to mind his own business. It was no business of his. The duty and the grave responsibility of deciding who shall be prosecuted for political offences, and who shall not, rests on the Attorney-General and the Executive Government of the day; and for a judge on the Bench to attempt to influence, or, as it might be said, to intimidate the Attorney-General and the Executive Government in the discharge of this delicate and responsible duty, is a scandal which, in my opinion, could take place nowhere in the civilised world except in Ireland. Just think for a moment what a serious matter this might be. Suppose to-morrow that the Lord Chief Justice goes down to his Court and orders the Attorney-General to prosecute me; and suppose the Attorney-General takes his orders, and does prosecute me; then I am to be sent for trial before the very judge who has ordered my indictment;—and the Irish people, in the face of such things, are blamed because they have no confidence in the administration of justice. You would think that of all men living the present Lord Chief Justice of Ireland would be the last to be guilty of this indiscretion. It is not the first time that he has afforded an argument to us. It is not the first time he has given us an example of the demoralising effects of the absence of National Self-government. I remember, immediately after he was appointed Lord Chief Justice, a great speech made in Manchester on the 3rd December 1889 by Mr Gladstone. Mr Gladstone said:

“The Attorney-General has been rewarded for his jury-packing in Ireland, and for his mode of conducting public business, by being appointed Lord Chief Justice in Ireland. When these proceedings go on, do you think it odd that the Irish have not the same affection as you have, and do not place the same confidence as you are happily enabled to place, in the judges of the land? . . . Conduct of that sort indicates and illustrates the broad, vital, fundamental difference between the whole tone and spirit of the administration of the law in Ireland and the administration of the law in England.”

Now, have I established my point? Let me briefly sum it up. I say there is to-day a widespread distrust of

the administration of justice in Ireland. This I say is the natural and inevitable result, first of foreign-made laws, then of exceptional and oppressive laws; then of the vital difference in the system, principle and practice in the administration of the laws in England and in Ireland; then, further, there is the practice of exhuming old and obsolete laws like that of Edward III. for the purpose of punishing political opponents; then that distrust is due to the difference in the mode of appointing judges, and finally, and above all else, to the system of jury-packing unknown in England, which poisons the fountains of justice. These things cannot be contradicted; and if so, I have made an unanswerable argument in favour of Home Rule, of condemnation of British rule, under which such enormities are possible.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1898

Ennis, 17th November 1907.

In 1898 an Act was passed for the establishment of Local Government in Ireland on popular lines. In this speech Mr Redmond deals with the successful working of the Act by the popular bodies which it brought into being.

I WANT to-day to address myself to one argument, and one alone, on this question of Home Rule. I want to-day, if you will bear with me, to answer a foul and lying accusation made recently against the Irish people by Mr Arthur Balfour. Fellow-countrymen, when Mr Arthur Balfour found that the Home Rule movement was again coming to a head, he cast about for some new argument to induce the people of England to revive those feelings of hostility which defeated us twenty years ago, but which he knows to-day have disappeared from the heart of the masses of the working men in England. Since the Home Rule Bill of 1893 was proposed an entirely new fact has arisen which completely undermines and destroys the main argument of the opponents to Home Rule. The stock argument in England was that it would be unsafe to give Home Rule to Ireland, because the Irish people—so the world was told—were unfit for self-government, and, if they got power into their hands, would instantly ruin the country by the extravagance, corruption and general incapacity of those selected to administer their local affairs, and that the majority would persecute and oppress and, in fact, destroy the Protestant minority living in their midst. Yes, and I tell you that this argument was the main factor in defeating the Home Rule Bill twenty years ago. In vain we appealed to the experience of the world, to the experience of other lands; in vain we pointed out that wherever Irishmen went through the world they proved themselves

capable of self-government, and that they had supplied to the Empire itself some of its greatest and wisest rulers. But it was all of no use. We defeated our opponents in argument, but we could not touch what seemed to be almost a superstition in the minds of Englishmen, that whatever might be the case with Irishmen abroad, the Irishmen at home in their own country were incapable of self-government, and could not be safely trusted with the management of even the smallest of their own affairs. It was that argument that defeated us.

Now, fellow-countrymen, that argument has disappeared for ever, and instead of that we have now on our side a new and unanswerable argument for Home Rule, in the successful working of Local Government under the County Councils and District Councils. Remember that the Local Government Act of 1898 was a thorough and complete Act. It was not a half measure. It was not a half-way house. It conferred full and complete control, as fully and completely as was conferred on the English people and on the Scotch people, full and complete control of local affairs on the mass of the Irish people. It worked a social revolution; it completely disestablished the old ascendancy class from its position of power, and made the mass of the Irish people masters of all the finance and all the local affairs of Ireland. It placed enormous patronage in the hands of the people, it gave them control of the expenditure of vast sums of money—in a word, a more thorough test of the capacity of the mass of the Irish people to govern themselves could not be devised. Many people prophesied evil. Lord Salisbury, in 1885, declared that Home Rule itself would be fraught with less danger. He said that he would prefer to give full National Self-Government to Ireland than to give her a system of County Councils, and that when conferring Local Government freely on England and Scotland, if it were to be extended to Ireland, the result would be ruin, mismanagement, corruption and intolerance. Mr Gerald Balfour, the man who carried the Act of '98, declared at the time that

"If the councillors did their work with business capacity, and in a spirit of toleration, it would mitigate one of the arguments which had always been felt to tell heavily in England against Home Rule."

Therefore, fellow-countrymen, by universal admission of friends and foes, this Local Government Act was a great test of the fitness of the people to govern themselves.

Now, I want to-day to ask how has Ireland stood the test? Until this year no one was found to dispute the fact that Local Government was working efficiently, economically and successfully in Ireland, but at the commencement of the year, when, as I said, the Home Rule movement was again coming to a head, Mr Arthur Balfour, on 8th March, made a speech to a deputation of Irish Unionists, in which he declared that the Local Government Act had been a failure in Ireland. Now let me read for you what he said:

"If the information that you have to-day given me be correct, and it is confirmed from all quarters which I have had an opportunity of consulting, the Local Government Act is being used in every county in Ireland where the Nationalist party have a majority, not to further the administrative necessities of that county, not to appoint, not to use the patronage vested in the majority for the purpose of appointing the best men to do the work they have to do. It is used as a great electoral machine for promoting the party interests of a particular section, even though the really essential local interests of the community are fatally sacrificed thereby. But when we come to the problem of what we ought or ought not to hand over to the party which thus uses the powers which have been given to it by the Imperial Parliament, are we bound to draw the inevitable inference, and say that those who have proved themselves unworthy of the trust in small matters cannot be given the larger trust which they claim at our hands?"

He then went on to declare that the English people should draw the inevitable inference that these people who had proved themselves unworthy of trust in small matters could not now be given a larger trust in the shape of Home Rule. There is an accusation clear and definite. It is an accusation of the failure of the Local Government in Ireland to meet the administrative necessities of the people,

of deliberately sacrificing the essential local interests of the community, an accusation of gross corruption in the making of appointments, an accusation of gross intolerance in the treatment of the Protestant minority. A clearer accusation was never made, and I say from this platform to-day that a falser or a more libellous accusation was never made against any people.

The Local Government system works, as you know, under the supervision and control of an English Government Board, the Local Government Board sitting in Dublin. The Tories were in office from the passing of the Act until a couple of years ago, yet that Government Board in Dublin, under the control of a Tory Government, gave the lie year after year to this accusation. In the Report of this Government Board for 1900 they say:

“The predictions of those who affirmed that the administration of a complete system of county government would inevitably break down, have not been verified. On the contrary, the County and District Councils have, with few exceptions, properly discharged the duties devolving upon them.”

In 1901 the same Government declared that

“Their duties had been satisfactorily and creditably discharged by the Councils and their officials throughout Ireland—not in one part of Ireland, but throughout all Ireland—”

and it goes on to say that

“The rates for the year under review were lower than those of the preceding year.”

Remember that the Local Government Board exercises supervision and control of a certain kind over all the work of Local Government. I think myself they exercise too strict a control, but at any rate they have control. Every action of these Boards can be reviewed by them, every payment made must be sanctioned by them, every contract entered into can be inquired into and reviewed by them, every penny spent by these bodies is subject to minute examination by the Government Auditors, and yet the reports of this Government Board declare that the work of these Councils has been efficiently done, that the

business is properly transacted, and that the rates have been reduced. Now, the report of this Board for the year 1902 is of the same character. It declares that

“The term of office of the first County Councils and Rural District Councils, on whom, with their officers, rests the credit of having successfully assisted in carrying the Local Government Act into operation, expired in June, and the new Councils, with the experience of the past three years, will, no doubt, endeavour to bring the system into a state of even greater efficiency. Attention has been directed to certain political differences which have been introduced by some of the smaller bodies into their ordinary business transactions, but it is only fair to state that these cases have been quite the exception and not the rule. They have been promptly dealt with, and we feel confident that the conduct of their affairs by the various local authorities and their officials will continue to justify the delegation to them of the large powers transferred to their control by the Local Government Act. In no other matters have the Councils been more successful than in their financial administration.”

The report of 1903 says the same thing. It states:

“The general administration of the Local Government Act by County and District Councils continues on the whole to be satisfactory, and the manner in which the several local bodies transact their business calls for no special observation. The collection of the rates has been efficiently carried out. Very great and most creditable improvements have taken place in the care of the sick during past years.”

The report for 1905 is precisely the same, and I therefore say that the reports of the Government from the passing of the Act right down to the time when the Tories left office give the lie direct to the allegation of Mr Arthur Balfour.

Let me quote one or two other authorities, because I want to nail this lie to the counter. Mr Gerald Balfour, the author of the Act, said, on the 24th March 1900:

“I am of opinion that the Act has been successfully worked and that the local bodies have shown themselves not unequal to the heavy task imposed upon them.”

Later on Mr George Wyndham declared, on the 27th February 1902:

"This Act effected nothing less than a social revolution. It took the political power in the matter of local affairs out of the hands of one class and gave the whole of it to other classes. In respect of economy and efficiency that social revolution has not been a failure. It has exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine."

There is my answer to-day to Mr Arthur Balfour's slander—that the working of the County Government in Ireland is, from a business point of view, from the point of view of economy and efficiency, a failure. Between the Urban Authorities and the County Authorities something over five millions a year are administered by the elected representatives of the people, and by the admission of everyone competent to speak, by the admission of this Government Board, year after year, by the admission of Mr Balfour's own brother, who was Chief Secretary for Ireland, by the admission of Mr Wyndham, who was also Chief Secretary for Ireland, all this money has been expended by the representatives of the people efficiently, economically and honestly.

Let me deal in a few words with the more insulting of the counts in Mr Arthur Balfour's accusation. He declares that

"Where Catholics and Nationalists are in a majority the Protestant and Unionist minority is oppressed and ill-treated."

It is made a complaint by some people that where Catholics are in a majority the County Councils are Nationalist and Catholic. What else do they expect? What else happens in England? Why, naturally, the County Councils must take the complexion of the constituents they represent. That is the case in England and Scotland and Wales, and when Englishmen talk to us of intolerance it is worth recalling the fact that though there are over two millions of Catholics in Great Britain, out of 567 British Members, there are only five Catholics returned to the House of Commons. Here in Ireland, where Protestants are in a small minority, out of 103 Irish Members, representing an overwhelming Catholic nation, twenty-seven

are Protestants. This talk of intolerance is absurd and dishonest.

Now let me test this question, making a comparison between the working of Local Government in some of the representative anti-Nationalist and Protestant counties in the north, and some of the most essentially Catholic and Nationalist counties in the south. You will find, if you listen to these figures that I am going to give you, that the intolerance is not on the side of the Catholic and Nationalist majority, but is on the side of these very men who went over to London and incited Mr Balfour to make this foul accusation against Ireland. I will take four Ulster counties, typically anti-Nationalist, Protestant counties—Armagh, Antrim, Fermanagh and Tyrone. These four counties have a population of 537,479. Now in these four counties the Nationalists are 40·1 per cent. of the whole population, or nearly one-half. Yet with this 40·1 per cent. of the population they have only twelve per cent. of the salaried appointments of those County Councils. Let me now take four Nationalist counties—Galway, Cork, Westmeath and King's County. They have a population of 718,976. The Protestants in these four counties are only 7·7 per cent. of the whole, and yet they have 23·8 per cent. of all the salaried appointments in the gift of the people. In the Ulster counties all the higher-paid offices are given to Protestants and anti-Nationalists; for example, in the County Fermanagh, although Catholics are, I believe, in a small majority, £5077 are paid to Protestants, anti-Nationalist officers, and only £600 paid to Catholic and Nationalist officers. On the other hand, let me take the County Clare. Here in Clare are only 2272 Protestant anti-Nationalists, and there are 112,334 Catholics and Nationalists, and yet here in this overwhelmingly Catholic county most of the best-paid offices in the gift of the people are held by Protestants. The County Surveyor is a Protestant, the assistants to surveyors are Protestants, and I am told that recently, when there was an election for Assistant County Surveyor, a Protestant was elected as against a Catholic. And why? Because

he was the better man. The Secretary to the County Council is a Protestant, and I say this, to the everlasting credit of the people of Clare, that they have shown this toleration, and that in electing those men, no matter what their creed was, they are forging the strongest argument in favour of Home Rule. Now, two more cases. In Armagh the Catholics are forty-five per cent. of the whole population. It is a Protestant county. Yet the Catholics have only six per cent. of the appointments. In the King's County, on the contrary, Protestants and Unionists are only ten per cent. of the population, and they actually hold forty-seven per cent. of the salaried appointments.

This comparison might be carried on indefinitely, but I say that the figures I have already quoted are a conclusive answer to the calumnies of Mr Balfour. Local Government has been a success in Ireland. The public affairs of the country have been worked more efficiently by far than they were under the old system of Grand Juries; there has been far more purity in the administration of local affairs, and public works have been carried out that never would have been touched under the Grand Juries. The whole working of the system of Local Government has improved, and the money has been, I believe, far better expended and far more economically expended, and through all you have proof given you that the people have used their powers tolerantly towards their Protestant fellow-countrymen, and towards those that differ from them in politics. Here, then, is the experience of the exercise of a power by a people who had no training, who had been deprived of the opportunity of any training in the art of government by English misrule. I ask you this in conclusion. It is in the power of the Irish people to make the concession of National Self-government certain in the near future. Nothing under Heaven can prevent the near triumph of this cause except the action of the Irish people themselves. Let the Irish people go on exhibiting business capacity and toleration. Let them go on with their movement, absolutely stainless so far as crime is concerned, a movement in which the whole people

are banded together as one man. Let them elect their leaders freely, but once having elected them, so long as they are in the position of leaders, let the people stand by them unitedly and loyally. If they do these things, then, as sure as to-morrow's sun will rise, Home Rule will be speedily achieved.

THE CANADIAN PRECEDENT FOR HOME RULE

Glasgow, 29th November 1907.

This Address was delivered before the Young Scots'
Society, Glasgow.

RECENT events have concentrated public attention upon the position of the great self-governing Colonies, and the grant of responsible government to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, with the cordial approval of all parties in England, at the very moment when autonomy is refused to Ireland, makes it useful for the advocates of Home Rule to dwell upon this strange anomaly. The denial to Ireland of the rights of self-government, side by side with the concession of those rights to so many portions of the Empire, a concession which has, without exception, led to prosperity and contentment, is one of the strangest anomalies in British history. Within the British Empire at this moment there are some twenty-six or twenty-seven Home Rule constitutions. Sixteen of these constitutions give the dependencies complete control over their own affairs, and in twelve cases genuine responsible governments, based upon the model of the home constitution, have been set up. In the remaining cases the representative principle is in force, though as yet full responsible government does not exist. In Ireland neither representative nor responsible government yet exists. Why is it refused? It is refused on the ground that such a concession would mean the disintegration of the Empire. Why was it granted in the other cases? It was granted in the hope of averting the disintegration of the Empire! And that hope has been abundantly fulfilled. Autonomy

has proved the bond of union of the Empire. What singular contradiction! What flying in the face of facts! In my opinion this anomaly is so striking, so irrational, and so mischievous, that if once it be really understood by the British people they will not let it stand. In old days, when the Empire was directed by narrow castes, and selfish interests, arrogant and prejudiced, an appeal to reason and justice in this matter would have been waste of breath. But the day of democracy has come; and I for one believe in the love of justice which is the first instinct of democracies. I believe the British people have conscience and heart as well as intelligence; and that they are ready to be guided by these when their higher nature is appealed to and their judgment gets a chance by the truth being clearly laid before them. That is my reason for coming over here, in the name of another democracy, to plead for justice and reason now that the democracy in Great Britain has, for the first time, come to have controlling power in Imperial policy. I propose, therefore, to take a striking illustration of this anomaly I speak of—an illustration of autonomy in Imperial policy—and to ask you to consider the case of Ireland by its light.

I do not intend to deal with the various Home Rule constitutions of the Empire, but rather to discuss one extraordinary and dramatic instance, which presents in its features an almost exact parallel with the Irish case, and to ask why the remedy for Canadian disaffection and misgovernment is impossible of application to Ireland. A great deal might be said about the circumstances surrounding the concession of autonomy wherever that right has been won by various portions of the Empire. It would be easy to show that in every case the Colonies had to win self-government by arduous struggles. It would be easy to show how loyalty to the Empire in no single case preceded the grant of autonomy, and that in cases like the Australias, Cape Colony and Canada self-government was won by great and menacing movements—breaking into open rebellion and bloodshed. All these colonies I have mentioned, which to-day are peaceful, contented

and loyal, were at one time in arms against England. Their loyalty in each case was won by the grant of autonomy. In the course of their struggles they had their agitations, their treasons, their conspiracies, their plots for separation, their rebellions. They all went through their periods of "Coercion," their suspensions of the Habeas Corpus, their imprisonments, their executions. In each case they had their "loyal minorities," opposing, in the interests of their own ascendancy the concessions of freedom to the mass of the people, and claiming to be the only upholders of the Empire. In every case these minorities were overborne, and in every case the result has belied their prophecies of evil. In no single case, however, is the parallel with Ireland so complete, so dramatically close, as in the case of Canada, and with this case alone I now desire to deal. In every single particular the political cases of Ireland and Canada are almost identical. The only difference is that the forces likely to make for the failure of Home Rule were much stronger in Canada than they are to-day in Ireland.

Canada had her two races and her two religions. The racial animosity between the French Canadians in Lower Canada and the British Canadians in Upper Canada was far greater than the racial animosity to-day between the mass of the Irish people and the Unionists in the north-east corner of Ulster. Lord Durham, in his famous report to the Home Government in 1838, says:

"The English look upon the French with contempt. . . . The French look upon the English with alarm, with jealousy, and finally with hatred. . . . Inter-marriages are rare. There was no combination for public purposes of any kind, not even for those of charities. . . . The only public occasion on which they ever meet is in the jury-box, and they meet there only to the utter obstruction of justice. . . . Terror and revenge nourished in each portion of the population a bitter and irreconcilable hatred to each other and to the institutions of the country. . . . The French, removed from all actual share in the government of their country, brood in sullen silence over the memory of their fallen countrymen, their burnt villages, their ruined property and their humble nationality. Never again will the present generation of French Canadians yield a loyal submission to a

British Government. Never again will the English population tolerate the authority of a House of Assembly in which the French shall possess, or even approximate, to a majority."

The French were still further separated from the British by religion and by their separate language. Here were conditions far more unfavourable to the experiment of self-government than any which exist in Ireland to-day; and that was the condition of Canada when Queen Victoria came to the throne. And yet that Sovereign lived to see the day when, as the direct result of Home Rule, Canada had become the most prosperous and loyal of all the dependencies of the Empire.

In 1791 Pitt gave to Canada a mock representative constitution. The Government began by a policy of "half measures," and never did the policy of "half measures" receive from history a more conclusive condemnation. He gave to Upper Canada, and to Lower Canada, each a separate Parliament, a House of Assembly, elected by the people with legislative powers, and a nominated Upper Chamber. All executive power, however, rested with the Governor and his Executive Council, which remained responsible to the Colonial Government in Downing Street. The local Legislature might pass bills, but it rested with the Executive to allow them to pass into Acts. The Legislature might vote supplies, but the Executive could spend them as they liked, quite irrespective of the wishes of the Legislature or the people. No matter how inefficient or corrupt or unpopular the Government might be, the representatives of the people had no power to dismiss it from office, or to control a single member of it. Against this condition of affairs—that is to say a "half-measure" or Parliament in name, but not in fact—a great popular movement arose, which finally broke into open rebellion. The end was that the half-measure had to be transformed into a whole measure, and complete responsible government conceded. It is that complete measure which has been in operation for well over half a century, and which has resulted in the Canada of to-day. Now, I want to ask you, in view of the history

which I am about to relate, to consider as you listen to it whether the Irish people showed a sound political instinct or not in rejecting the unfortunate Councils Bill of last year. That was a half-measure, one of the inevitable breed that comes from timorous, mistrustful and uninspired counsels, and the Irish people, had it passed into law, would have had to go on fighting for many a year, like the Canadians I am about to tell you of, to get it turned into a measure of real autonomy. I say fighting for many a year; for the Imperial Parliament, having passed such a Bill, would have felt it had done its duty for some time to come. We would have been told to give the new constitution a trial, and so forth, and no heed would have been paid to any suggestions for altering it until it would have proved a failure as it stood. Proving it a failure might mean to some people that we were not fit for self-government at all. The agitation and the fight would have had to be done all over again. The half-measure would have meant, as it meant in Canada, years of unsatisfactory government, years of conflict, disorder and bitterness. Were the Irish people wise in saying: "We had better not have this. We had better wait for the real thing"?

Now, just listen. I want you to realise the extraordinary likeness of that agitation in Canada—agitation, remember, to have a half-measure made a whole measure—the extraordinary likeness of that agitation in all its particulars, and of the resistance to that agitation in all its particulars, to the case of Ireland. The history of this great National movement is, with changed names, precisely the history of the Irish movement for Home Rule. Its leader was Papineau instead of Parnell. In a most valuable pamphlet written in 1886, Mr T. P. Gill gives a striking picture of the similarities. The various features of the agitation that culminated in the Canadian rebellion deserve minute study, for they bear a resemblance that is positively startling to the forms in which Irish disaffection has manifested itself from time to time. The agitation had its leader. Papineau was the Canadian Parnell.

Monster meetings were held on Sundays, at which the people assembled in thousands, with bands, banners and Nationalist paraphernalia. Resolutions were adopted denouncing the Government, summoning the people to organise, and devising the boycotting of English manufactures. Hatred of England became a national passion. Feeling ran so high that the representatives of the Crown were unable to procure convictions for political offences, and consequently had resort to the familiar Irish device of packing juries and placing partisan judges on the Bench. There were summonses to the Court of King's Bench for conspiracy and disrespect towards Viceregal proclamations, and ancient statutes were disinterred for the purpose of coercing without Coercion Acts. Perhaps the most striking resemblance between the Canadian situation and that of Ireland was the figure cut by the "Loyal Minority," who were more British than the British themselves, and who claimed a monopoly of all "the wealth, the industry and intelligence of the country"; who declared that what the Nationalist majority required was "total separation," and "the spoliation of the minority," and who threatened to rebel or quit the benighted land if Home Rule should be granted. Boycotting was a popular weapon. Meetings were vainly "proclaimed" as they are in Ireland, and up to the last moment it was the habit of Government officials to shut their eyes to the extent and character of the disaffection, or to wilfully minimise and misrepresent them in their reports to Parliament, pretending that it was the manufactured disorder of a gang of self-seeking and insignificant agitators who lived by public disturbance.

The consequence of this harassing and blind denial of real discontent inevitably followed. The Canadians despaired of constitutional agitation; and the year Queen Victoria came to the throne Lower Canada was in insurrection, and Upper Canada was preparing to rise. Let me prove the truth of this picture by some quotations from the despatches of Lord Gosford, the Governor-General of Canada. In a despatch to Lord Glenelg, on the 9th September 1837, he says:

"There have been held in different parts of the Province. . . . meetings styled by those who convened them "anti-coercion meetings." . . . The principal objects of the resolutions passed at these meetings were to condemn the Ministerial measures and the policy of the home Government and local administration; to recommend smuggling and the adoption of other measures for cutting off resources and diminishing the revenue; to excite to disaffection and resistance towards the Imperial and Provincial Authorities; to suggest the formation of central and permanent committees for political purposes in each county, and of a General Convention of the whole Province; and, finally, to create a feeling which would lead up to the severance of the connection between the Colony and the Parent State, by representing that justice was to be no longer had from the latter, but only tyranny and oppression, and by disseminating doctrines and employing language and banners of a seditious, inflammable and disloyal character."

Does not this read like one of the late Mr Foster's speeches during the time of the Land League, or like a speech of Mr Walter Long of to-day? In the same despatch Lord Gosford says about the administration of justice:

"The great difficulty of procuring strict legal evidence for bringing home, in a Court of Justice, to the parties concerned, the charges that might be founded on the proceedings at these meetings, added to the questionable policy of political prosecutions, especially at a time like the present, when the minds of a portion of the jury summoned to try the offence would probably be poisoned by the misrepresentations and efforts of the disaffected, have as yet prevented any resort to the Courts of Law for the punishment of those implicated in such proceedings."

On the question of the difficulty of obtaining convictions in political cases Lord Gosford further says:

"Indeed, in two recent instances, where the Attorney-General preferred bills of indictment in the Court of King's Bench at Montreal, one against a Dr Duchesnois, for publicly tearing and treating with contempt the proclamation issued by me on the 15th June last, and another against a certain individual in the county of the Two Mountains, for a conspiracy to drive out of the country, by means of threats and acts of violence, several inhabitants, because they held opposite political opinions, the bills have been ignored by the Grand Jury in the face of the strongest evidence."

One would imagine this to be part of a speech in support of abolishing trial by jury under the Irish Jubilee Coercion Act of 1887. On 2nd September 1837 Lord Gosford wrote:

“It is evident that the Papineau faction are not to be satisfied with any concession that does not place them in a more favourable position to carry into effect their ulterior objects, namely, the separation of this country from England and the establishment of a Republican form of Government.”

Change the single word Papineau for Parnell and you have an exact reproduction of one of the most popular cant phrases of the Irish “loyal minority.” Boycotting was rife. Here are the words of Attorney-General Ogden, in a report to Lord Gosford on the 2nd October 1837:

“A system of proscription, based upon national distinctions and political prejudices, was adopted and pursued. The British inhabitants, and those loyal Canadians who adhered to the political principles of their British fellow-subjects, perceived on a sudden that all intercourse between them and those of their neighbours who professed a different political opinion was studiously denied; all interchange of the ordinary offices or the common necessities of life had abruptly terminated; they had incurred the penalty of social excommunication!”

And is not the following from the same report exactly similar to the descriptions given of Irish disturbances in the House of Commons by upholders of the Union, and stated by them as the strongest arguments against Home Rule?

“Mobs assembled by night, and with shouts of intimidation and threats of personal violence endeavoured to terrify the loyal inhabitants into an adoption of their principles. The house of one Jean Baptiste Cleval, a captain of Militia, and a man distinguished for his loyalty, was fired into, to the imminent danger of the lives of his family. . . . The British subjects (settlers) were also subjected to a series of harassing annoyances—their fences were broken down, their cattle driven astray, their horses cropped and otherwise disfigured, and a variety of petty injuries inflicted.”

So that even "cattle-driving," supposed to be a modern invention of the West of Ireland, was then in full force in Canada. Finally, could anything be more exactly similar to the declarations of Unionists about the National Movement, that it is the work of designing agitators who "delude their ignorant fellow-countrymen," and have the "bulk of the population against them" than the following:—Lord Gosford wrote to Lord Glenelg on the 30th October 1837:

"With religion, law, and the loyalty of the great bulk of the population opposed to them, the party now fomenting sedition, although they may, if not checked, create local and temporary confusion, are not likely to meet with the success which, from the boldness of their proceedings, they seem to anticipate. Their strength lies in activity, and in the artful and unscrupulous misrepresentation with which they delude and excite their more ignorant countrymen."

On the other side of the picture let me cite some of the declarations of the Nationalist majority to show how precisely similar in all its features the struggle for Home Rule in Canada was to the struggle of the last twenty-five years in Ireland. The following is an extract from an address by the Confederation of the Six Counties to the people of Canada on 24th October 1837:

"Our citizens are deprived of the benefits of impartially-chosen juries, and are arbitrarily persecuted by Crown officers, who, to suit the purposes of the vindictive Government of which they are the creatures, have revived proceedings of an obsolete character, precedents for which are to be found only in the darkest pages of British history; thus, our judiciary being filled by the combined conspiracies of a wicked Executive, slavish judges, partisan law officers and political sheriffs, the innocent and patriotic are exposed to be sacrificed, whilst the enemies of the country and the violators of all law are patronised."

The following words are taken from an address by the Sons of Liberty of Montreal to the Young Men of the North American Colonies on the 4th of October 1837:

"The trial by jury, which we have been taught to look upon as the palladium of our liberties, is made a vain illusion or instrument of despotism, inasmuch as sheriffs, creatures of the Executive . . . can select and summon such persons as they please, and thereby become themselves the arbiters in State prosecutions instituted against the people by their oppressors."

And Lord Durham, in his report, said:

"The public have no security for any fairness in the selection of juries. There was no check on the sheriff. The public knew he could pack a jury whenever he pleased, and supposed that an officer holding a lucrative appointment at the pleasure of the Government would be ready to carry into effect their designs."

The Parliament of Lower Canada—that is, the body with incomplete and illusory powers—passed a series of resolutions early in 1837, of which the following is one:

"Resolved.—That it has long been the aim of the enemies of these Colonies, by deliberate and unfounded misrepresentations, to engender dissensions and bad feelings between the people thereof, in the hope of preventing all union of purpose among the people, and of thereby preventing the reform of those abuses and evils of which the people have so frequently complained and which are connived at or upheld for the advantage of a minority hitherto unjustly possessing, and still endeavouring to maintain, a political ascendancy in this province, contrary to the principles of all good government."

This Parliament of Lower Canada refused for four or five consecutive years to vote supplies. At length an Act of Parliament was passed in England to overbear them, and finally the Canadian Constitution, such as it was, was totally suspended. Note the significance of this fact—the fate of the half-measure. It was suspended. We are told in Ireland that if the half-measure did not prove satisfactory it could be subsequently improved and extended. Well, the story of Canada does not justify that theory. It justifies, on the contrary, the view that the agitation to get the half-measure extended would be so resisted, and would be provocative of so much turmoil and exasperation, that the resistance would take the form of saying that the

experiment had proved the unfitness of the people for self-government, and that such rights as had been conceded should be suspended and withdrawn. The question then would have to pass into the region of physical force, and the agitation to take the form of rebellion. This is what happened in Canada. When that Act was passed in England, and this imperfect Constitution was suspended, the people broke into open rebellion, and the rebellion was suppressed by bloodshed and the superior armed forces of England. It was at this moment, and in these circumstances, that Lord Durham was sent out from England to report on the state of the country. Lord Durham was a remarkable man, and his report, from which I have already quoted, is a remarkable document. Indeed, it is one of the most extraordinary documents extant, and every word of it would repay perusal by those who desire to understand the Irish question. His report was at first not listened to at home, and he was recalled for making it. Such was the penalty of telling the truth to the English governing classes. But he lived to see his report become the charter of Canadian autonomy. Well, what did he find? He found, as is the case of Ireland to-day, an absolute ascendancy in the government of the country, due to "unjust favouritism," resting in the hands of a small minority of the people. All power, all place, all dignities, all offices, were in the hands of this favourite ring, who regarded the bulk of the people with contempt and hatred. In Ireland the monopolists have been known as the "Ascendancy Gang." In Canada they were known as the "Family Compact." They held all the chief offices and controlled the Executive and successive Governors by social and political influences. Lord Durham in his report said:

"The Bench, the magistracy, the high places in the Episcopal Church, and a great part of the legal profession, are filled by this party; by grant or purchase they have acquired nearly the whole of the unoccupied lands of the province; they are all-powerful in the chartered banks, and till lately they shared among themselves exclusively all offices of trust and profit. The principal members of this party belong to the Church of England,

and maintenance of the claims of that Church has always been one of their distinguishing characteristics."

The Anglican clergy were richly endowed, to the exclusion of Catholic, Presbyterian and other dissenting churches, the Catholics being by far the most numerous. Social and official precedence in everything was given to the Established Church. The "Family Compact" were predominant in the Upper Chamber of the Legislature and always controlled the Executive; while the Legislative Assembly, being elected by the people, always contained a large majority of Nationalists, or "Reformers," as they were called. Lord Durham reported that the only way to deal with the Canadian problem was by the bestowal of full responsible government. In his report he said:

"It is difficult to conceive what could have been their theory of government who imagined that in any colony of England a body invested with the name and character of a representative assembly could be deprived of any of those powers which, in the opinion of Englishmen, are inherited in a popular Legislature. It was a vain delusion to imagine that by mere limitations in the Constitution Act, or an exclusive system of government, a body strong in the consciousness of wielding the public opinion of the majority could look on as a passive or indifferent spectator while laws were carried into effect by men in whose intentions or capacity it had not the slightest confidence. Yet such was the limitation upon the authority of the Assembly of Lower Canada. It might refuse to pass laws, vote or refuse supplies; but it could exercise no influence on a single officer of the Crown. The Executive, the Law Officers, the heads of the Administrative Departments, were placed in power without any regard to the wishes of the people or their representatives, nor indeed are there wanting instances in which hostility to the majority of the people elevated the most incompetent persons to posts of honour and trust."

However decidedly the assembly might condemn the policy of the Government, the persons who advised that policy retained their offices. "If a law was passed after repeated conflicts it had to be carried into effect by those who most strenuously opposed it."

What an accurate description of the system of government in Ireland to-day! Lord Durham reported in favour of full Home Rule. He was opposed by the Duke of Wellington, who said in the House of Lords:

“ Their lordships might depend that local responsible Government and the sovereignty of Great Britain were completely incompatible.”

He was also opposed by Lord Stanley, who said in the House of Lords:

“ What would be the consequences (of granting the Canadian demand)? The establishment of a republic—the concession would remove the only check to the tyrannical power of the dominant majority—a majority in numbers only, while in wealth, education and enterprise they are greatly inferior to the minority. The minority of the settlers are of British descent, and one thing is certain, if these settlers find themselves deprived of British protection they will protect themselves. Measures to that effect could be taken within six months after the concession.”

How exactly similar to the anti-Home Rule orations of to-day! “ Wealth, education and enterprise ” against Home Rule! If Home Rule was granted the minority would protect themselves. “ Ulster would fight, and Ulster would be right.” Lord Durham was recalled in disgrace from Canada. His policy was defeated for the moment, and denounced as vigorously as the policy of Mr Gladstone in 1868, though it was supported by O’Connell and some of the Radicals of the day; but he had the gratification of seeing his wisdom afterwards speedily acknowledged, and in 1840 the Canadian problem was solved as he had recommended.

By the Act 3 and 4 Victoria, chap. 35, the two Canadas were united under a single constitution, “ similar in principle,” to quote the words of the statutes, “ to that of the United Kingdom.” The Executive Council was made responsible to the Legislature in the same way as the Cabinet is responsible to Parliament. Members of the Council, like Cabinet Ministers, vacated their seats on

appointment, and had to seek re-election before they could act; and the Council was liable to be turned out of office by the vote of the legislative bodies. In a word, the Canadian people were "to execute as well as to make laws." In addition to the Dominion Parliament the Provinces of Canada have to-day their local Provincial Legislatures and responsible governments, and there are no people in the world who enjoy fuller or more complete Home Rule—won by these years of calumny and persecution—won by these sacrifices of liberty and of life—to which I have referred. And what is the result?

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne, Canadians, as I have pointed out, were in armed rebellion against England. When the British Government of that day ordered *Te Deums* to be sung in Canadian churches to celebrate her accession, the congregations rose *en masse* and left the buildings! When Lord Durham arrived in Canada the country was divided by bitter racial and religious differences. It was in a condition of absolute industrial and economic stagnation. Emigration from Canada was proceeding in the most alarming proportions. Lord Durham in his report says:

"But the chances of rebellion or foreign invasion are not those which I regard either the most probable or the most injurious. The experience of the last two years suggests the occurrence of a much more speedy and a disastrous result. I dread, in fact, the completion of the sad work of depopulation and impoverishment which is now rapidly going on. The present evil is not merely that improvement is stayed, and that the wealth and population of these Colonies do not increase according to the rapid scale of American progress. No accession of population takes place by immigration, and no capital is brought into the country. On the contrary, both the people and the capital seem to be quitting these distracted provinces."

The problem, in a word, presented all the features of the Irish problem to-day—a disaffected and rapidly-diminishing population, racial and sectarian strife, and universal industrial stagnation. What is the state of Canada to-day? Not one prophecy of evil has been realised! On the

contrary, fifty years of liberty have transformed the country. Racial animosity is to-day unknown. The French and English mix together in perfect harmony and good-will, each race using its own language, proud of its own origin, but grasping hands in devotion to the great free Canadian nation, of which they both are equally free citizens. Sectarian hatred is practically dead. The Protestants have their own schools, where the Protestant religion is taught, and side by side the Catholics have their school, where the Catholic Faith is taught. The two religions live in perfect peace with each other. The Catholic French Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, commands the confidence of the Protestants of Ontario as much as of the Catholics of Quebec.

A distinguished Protestant member of the Quebec Parliament, Mr Colby, said, in a speech quoted in the British House of Commons, on the 12th April 1893:

“The Protestants and Catholics of the Province of Quebec live happily together upon mutually-respecting terms, without jealousy and without friction. The Protestants of Quebec acknowledge the fact that never was a minority in any country treated with more justice, more liberality, and with more generosity than the Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec have been treated.”

Of the advancement of the material and industrial condition of Canada there is no need to speak. In his Budget speech at Ottawa, in 1898, Mr Fielding, Minister of the Finance, said:

“At no time in the history of the Dominion have the people been more united, more harmonious, more hopeful and confident respecting the future. In all the centres of manufacture, trade and commerce, there is an activity which tells of the confidence.”

To-day Canada is strong and prosperous, contented and well-governed. Ireland is weak, poverty-stricken, disaffected and admittedly misgoverned. Ireland, in a word, is to-day at the point where Canada was at the date of Lord Durham's report—people and capital quitting her

distracted shores. What is there inherent in the natures of the people, or the nature of the case, which justifies any man in saying that the remedy which transformed Canada would not also transform Ireland? Canada is in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. Twice recently her Dominion Parliament passed votes in support of Ireland's claim. The conciliation of Canada was a great and invaluable work. But does not every educated Englishman know that it would pale into insignificance compared with the importance of the conciliation of Ireland? The cure for sectarian and racial animosity, for industrial stagnation and universal dissatisfaction in Canada, was found in disregarding the evil prophecies and opposition of the so-called "loyal minority" and in fully trusting the mass of the people. In this policy, and in this alone, is to be found the saving of Ireland.

HOME RULE RESOLUTION

House of Commons, 30th March 1908.

On the 30th March 1908 Mr Redmond moved the following Resolution :—

“That the present system of government in Ireland is in opposition to the will of the Irish people, and gives them no voice in the management of their own affairs; that the system is consequently inefficient and extravagantly costly; that it does not enjoy the confidence of any section of the population; that it is productive of universal discontent and unrest, and is incapable of satisfactorily promoting the material and intellectual progress of the people: that the reform of Irish government is a matter vital to the interests of Ireland, and calculated greatly to promote the well-being of the people of Great Britain; and, in the opinion of this House, the solution of this problem can only be obtained by giving to the Irish people the legislative and executive control of all purely Irish affairs.”

THE recent history of the Home Rule movement and the circumstances in which the question of Home Rule stands at this moment render, in my opinion, the Resolution which I have the honour to move necessary from the point of view of the interest of everybody concerned, from the point of view of England and of Ireland, from the point of view of the Liberal majority in this House, and if I may say so of the Government.

The Home Rule question stands at this moment in a strange and anomalous position—a position which cannot indefinitely continue. We are assembled here in a House of Commons the overwhelming majority of which is made up of men who have always professed their belief that the only solution of the Irish problem is the concession of Home Rule to Ireland—and of men, let me say, most of whom in season and out of season have made public pro-

fession of that belief. And we have in office a Government of whom I can truthfully say that every man of it at one time or another has given public pledges to the same effect; and yet owing to the circumstances which surrounded the last election and the period immediately before it they find themselves, they say, debarred from giving legislative effect in this Parliament to those convictions that they have expressed.

I, for myself, deplored the circumstances as they arose which they say debarred them, and I deplore them still, but I must perforce recognise facts, and I believe it is a fact that certain members—I do not know how many—of the present Government, and a considerable number of members of the rank and file of the Liberal Party, did at the last election, quite gratuitously as it seemed to me, pledge themselves to their constituents that they would not introduce Home Rule as we understand it, or attempt to give legislative effect to it as we understand it, during the life of this Parliament.

I may perhaps be allowed to recall with gratitude that the Prime Minister made no such declaration, and at this moment when everybody, political friend and foe alike, are watching with strained anxiety by his bedside, it is a sincere gratification to me to be able to say that it will never be forgotten by Ireland that no stress of circumstances induced him to lower the Home Rule flag, or to declare that he would postpone the demand of Ireland. This anomalous and illogical position, namely, of a great and powerful Government commanding a great and powerful majority in this House, all pledged to the principle of Home Rule, but yet debarred by their declarations at the election from introducing legislation to give effect in this Parliament, makes it, in my judgment, necessary in everybody's interest, as I have said, that this Resolution should be moved, in order that we may find our bearings, in order to enable this Government and this House at least to place upon record the convictions that they entertain, and if I may say so, to free the hand of the Liberal party and the members of the Government at the next election, so as to

make sure that then, at any rate, the question of Home Rule will not be excluded from the consideration of the electors. There is another consideration why in my judgment this Resolution is necessary, and that is to be found in the history of the Irish Council Bill last year. That was not a Home Rule Bill. It was not offered to us as a Home Rule Bill—there was no deception attempted on the part of the Government—still it was recommended to us as a step in the direction of Home Rule.

Our attitude on this question of what is called the policy of the half-way house has never been in any doubt. In public and in private, formally and informally, on the floor of this House and everywhere where we have spoken for the last twenty-five years, we have declared our conviction that nothing could settle this question except the creation by this Parliament of a legislative assembly in Ireland with executive powers. We have declared with equal emphasis that in our judgment it would pass the art of man to devise a satisfactory or logical half-way house upon this question. But when we found, as we did find, that the Government felt themselves debarred from introducing the only possible solution in our minds, we then frankly did our best to aid the Government in drafting a Bill that would have been regarded as a tolerable Bill. We put our views as to the constitution of the body to be created fully before the Government, and while I am the first to admit that the Chief Secretary did his best to meet these views, and that the Government went what, no doubt, they regarded as, a considerable distance to meet those views, at the same time those views were not fully met, and we felt that the question of the acceptance or rejection of this half-way house must be discussed and decided, not by us on the floor of this House, but by the Irish people in Ireland. The question was discussed, and with practical unanimity it was decided. I know there is a difference of opinion, even amongst the best friends of Ireland, as to whether that action of ours was wise or unwise. I am not going to discuss that question now. I point to the Council Bill of last year for the purpose simply

of fortifying myself when I say that that history shows that the dealing with this question of Home Rule by a half-way house measure is now no longer possible, and that consideration in my mind makes it necessary for me and my colleagues to put this Resolution before the House claiming a full settlement of the question. That, Mr Speaker, is the intention and meaning of my Resolution.

I notice that there are quite a number of Amendments upon the paper. There are only two, however, with which I think it necessary very briefly to deal. The first is the Amendment standing in the name of the noble lord the Member for South Kensington. I regard his Amendment as raising a perfectly straight and uncompromising issue. I therefore welcome his Amendment. His Amendment is certainly uncompromising, for it would preclude not only a Home Rule Bill, but it would equally preclude the Council Bill of last year. Under its terms it would actually preclude the possibility of even private Bill legislation being taken from this House and given to an Irish assembly. But the noble lord's Amendment indicates no alternative policy to Home Rule, and in my judgment no hon. Member can vote for that Amendment who is not prepared to say that the present system of government in Ireland—which has been denounced by almost every Lord-Lieutenant who has gone there for the last thirty-five years, no matter from what party he came—is satisfactory and sufficient. Again I say that I welcome the noble lord's Amendment because it raises a perfectly plain issue—on the one side trust in the people, and, on the other, the old Tory policy of repression. The other Amendment to which I think it necessary to allude for a moment stands in the name of the hon. Member for Walthamstow. It is the last Amendment of the string that stand upon the paper, and it is a proposal desiring to add at the end of my Resolution words safeguarding the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. I regard those words as unnecessary and superfluous, and in my judgment they add nothing whatever to the meaning of my Resolution. We have always recognised the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and

we have always held the view that it would be impossible to alienate that supremacy in creating a statutory legislation for Ireland. The Bill of 1886 was based upon the maintenance of the supremacy of this Parliament. The preamble—the very first words—of Mr Gladstone's Bill of 1893 were these:

“Without impairing or restricting the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament a legislature shall be created.”

We have never made any disguise about this matter. Allow me to quote two or three words spoken by Mr Parnell with reference to this question when it came up in 1886. On 7th June in that year Mr Parnell said:

‘The right hon. gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr Goschen) spoke about the sovereignty of Parliament. I entirely agree upon that point. We have always known the difference between a co-ordinate and a subordinate Parliament, and we have always recognised that the legislature which the Prime Minister proposes to constitute is a subordinate Parliament. You leave the power and supremacy of Parliament untouched and unimpaired just as though this Bill had never been brought forward. We fully recognise this to be the effect of the Bill, and I now repeat what I have always said, that the Irish people have accepted it as a settlement.’

That has been our position from that day to this. The Irish Parliamentary party, from the day of that declaration down to this moment, has never abandoned the position then taken up, and I say to the hon. and learned Member for Walthamstow that in my judgment his words are superfluous; but if he or any other friends of Home Rule for Ireland—and I recognise that the hon. and learned Member is a friend of Home Rule—desires to add those words, although we think them unnecessary and superfluous, we certainly will accept them.

Now, let me turn to the main argument in support of my Resolution. I do not want to delay the House by repeating once again the old, old arguments which, though they still hold good to-day, have been repeated so often in this House—repeated by myself so often in this Parlia-

ment—that they must be familiar to hon. Members sitting in all quarters of the House.

What I want this afternoon is to show if I can that an entirely new situation has arisen within the last twenty years since this question was last discussed. I will not therefore go in detail into the proofs of the failure of British Governments in Ireland since the Union. I will not stop to dwell on the meaning of the reduction of the population in fifty years by one-half; I will not stop to discuss this afternoon the damning proof of the failure of your Government to be found in the fact that on the admission of both sides of the House education in all its branches is lamentably neglected, but in passing, perhaps the House will allow me to say on that subject just this: what a commentary on British rule in Ireland it is that to-morrow we are going to discuss an effort—I hope it will prove a successful effort—to deal with University education in Ireland. It is just thirty-five years since the Prime Minister of this country introduced a measure to settle that question, and all during those thirty-five years the representatives of each Government in turn on coming into office have admitted the justice of the demand, admitted the grievance, and we have had to wait thirty-five years for the effort which is to be made to-morrow by the Chief Secretary of Ireland. That in itself would be sufficient to condemn the whole system of government in Ireland. Nor will I stop to dwell on the taxation of Ireland—doubled per head of the population in the last fifty years. I will not stop to deal with the question of the extravagant cost of Irish government, because the powerful statement of my hon. and learned friend the Member for East Tyrone last Thursday sufficiently covered that portion of the Home Rule case, and because there was something in the debate of last Thursday more powerful than the speech of my hon. and learned friend. The extravagant waste and the excessive cost was admitted by speakers in every quarter of the House, and yet no man could be found to suggest any other solution than to hand over these matters to the government of the Irish people themselves. Therefore I

pass from these familiar topics of argument simply saying that Ireland to-day is worse governed, is more discontented with your rule, and is more determined never to cease her demand until she has received Home Rule, than at any period of the Home Rule controversy. I say that an entirely new situation has arisen with reference to this question since 1886 and 1893. New facts have arisen, new circumstances have appeared, and the whole political position has really been revolutionised. First of all, let me point out that almost without exception every one of those great arguments which were urged against Home Rule in those days, and which had so much weight with the people of this country, and which led to the defeat of the Home Rule Bills, has since then disappeared, and more extraordinary still they have been disposed of and put out of the way by legislation of the Unionist party.

What were these great arguments? First of all, there was the argument that Irishmen were unfit to rule themselves. I do not think many people put faith in that so crudely as Lord Salisbury did when he mentioned the Irish race in connection with Hottentots as among those races unfitted for the exercise of self-government. But there is no question that probably the most powerful of all the arguments against Home Rule in its effect in the country twenty years ago was the argument pressed upon the English people that Ireland herself would run the terrible risk of being ruined under Home Rule by incompetence, extravagance and jobbery. What has become of that argument? The Local Government Act of 1898 was passed by the Unionist Government. Let me remind hon. gentlemen opposite that it was not a half-measure. The present leader of the Opposition, I think it was, two or three years earlier did introduce a half-measure on this question of local government and very soon withdrew it. The measure of 1898 was a full measure based on the same trust in the people that underlies the Local Government Act which is at work both in England and in Scotland, and the Chief Secretary of that day, Mr Gerald Balfour—whose absence from this House I confess I regret very much when

all these Irish questions are discussed, though we differed very often—made one very remarkable statement in the course of debate of that Bill; he said:

“If the Irish people do their work with business capacity and in a spirit of toleration, it will mitigate one of the arguments which has told heavily in England against Home Rule.”

Let me now ask the question. How has it worked? The Leader of the Opposition last year, upon faulty information supplied to him by a deputation, made a declaration in a speech outside the House to the effect that the County Councils were not working well in Ireland, that they were not doing their business with capacity, and, in fact, that they were sacrificing the interests of those whom they represented. I am glad to have an opportunity, face to face with the right hon. gentleman, of giving him the answer to that statement. The answer is very simple. The Local Government Board in Ireland, which supervises all the transactions of local governments in the country, has in its Report year by year, for every year that has passed since 1898, given the lie to that statement. I have all its Reports by me here; and they show year by year that the prediction of evil by those who did not trust the Irish people has been falsified, and that the business of the counties has been transacted honestly, economically and efficiently. These Reports appeared year after year while the right hon. gentleman was Prime Minister and his Government was in office at Dublin Castle, and yet, without reading these Reports of his own Government, the right hon. gentleman rashly last year committed himself to the statement to a deputation that the County Councils of Ireland were working inefficiently and corruptly, and some, in fact, sacrificing the interests of the ratepayers. I have his words.

Mr A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Did I say that?

Mr JOHN REDMOND: The right hon. gentleman has known me long enough in this House to be aware that I am not likely to make a statement of that kind without

being able to verify it. Here is the quotation from the speech of the right hon. gentleman:

“If the information you have given me is correct, and it is confirmed from all quarters with which I have had an opportunity of consulting, the Local Government Act is being used in every county in Ireland where the Nationalist party have a majority, not to further the administrative necessities of that country, not to use the patronage vested in the majority for the purpose of appointing the best men to do the work they have to do; it is used merely as a great electoral machine for promoting the interests of a political party, even though the essential local interests of the community are fatally sacrificed thereby.”

Well, now, I have given the first answer to that statement consisting of the Reports of the Local Government Board in Ireland year after year. The Report of the very year that speech was made, the Report of the right hon. gentleman's own Board, says the direct opposite.

Let me give another proof. When the Local Government Act came into operation great obstacles were placed in the way of its successful working. The County Councils were obliged to pension all officials on high scales. They had to face a new rate for technical instruction under the Act of 1899, and to take up their work under great difficulty caused by inexperience and the tangled condition of local administration. Yet notwithstanding all that, and notwithstanding the fact that these County Councils have set on foot and carried out great works in the shape of improvements of roads and other matters of that kind, taking Ireland as a whole, the rates have been reduced by these councils to the extent of 3d. in the £ all over Ireland. It is interesting to remember in this connection that the President of the Local Government Board in England stated in answer to a question the other day that the rural rates in England have been raised in the same period 1s. in the £. Where the Irish people have got control of rates and expenditure there has been this economy, this saving of public money, but in that portion of the expenditure in Ireland which is not under the control of the people, but under the control of this House, there has, during the same

period of eight years, been an increase of £1,000,000. At one time it was nearer £2,000,000. I respectfully submit to the House in the face of these facts that the old argument that the Irish people are unfit for the steady and sober management of their own affairs goes by the board.

The second great argument was that if Ireland got Home Rule legislation would be passed by an Irish Parliament to confiscate the property of the Irish landlords. Again the Unionist party have themselves removed that argument. We were told that an Irish Parliament would endeavour to put into an Act of Parliament the principles of Parnell and the Land League. What were those principles? Those principles were the abolition of landlordism and the creation of a peasant proprietary. Those principles were enshrined in the Unionist Land Act of the right hon. member for Dover. Whatever difficulties may have arisen in the working of the Act, and however Irish landlords may have received too high a price for their farms, the fact remains that your bogey of which you made so much use twenty years ago, that an Irish Parliament would rob Irish landlords, has been completely removed by the action of the Unionist party by the passage of the Land Act of 1903.

Let me take another of those bogeys—that of religious bigotry. The English people were told that if the Irish people got control of their own affairs that power would be used as an engine of religious bigotry. I have heard in this House complaints made of the working of the County Councils as proof that that is likely to take place. I have actually heard men in this House declare, as a reproach against Ireland, that in practically entirely Catholic parts of the country the County Councils have consisted, in the majority, of Catholics. It is absurd to raise an argument of that kind. Apply that argument to England, where the proportions are reversed. What would be said if I denounced the English nation as a religiously intolerant nation because of the fact that although there are about 2,000,000 of Catholics in Great Britain, yet out of the 567 Members returned to this House there are only five

Catholics, and if I went on to confound them by saying that in Ireland, where the Protestants are in a small minority, out of 103 members elected twenty-seven are Protestants, and that quite a number of them who sit as members of this party are elected to this House by almost entirely Catholic constituencies. I know what is in the mind—indeed more than in the mind—of the Leader of the Opposition, because he has expressed it. He takes the view that religion has influenced County Councils in the giving of paid offices, and I state that that is untrue. I have here the figures for every county in Ireland, and they prove the exact opposite. They prove indeed that if there is intolerance at all it is not in the Catholic parts of the country. Allow me to give two or three instances only. In Galway the Protestants are only 6 per cent. of the whole population, but they hold 19 per cent. of all the paid offices in the gift of the County Councils. In Cork the Protestants are 10 per cent. of the whole population, and they hold 23 per cent. of all the paid offices in the gift of the County Councils, and some of the most highly paid ones. In Cavan the Protestants are only 20 per cent. of the population, and they hold 47 per cent. of the paid offices. In West Meath the Protestants are only 9 per cent., and they possess 33 per cent. of all the paid offices.

If I turn to the other side of the picture, I find that in the northern portion of Ireland the story is the exact reverse. In Armagh the Catholics are 45 per cent. of the whole population, but they have only 6 per cent. of the paid offices. In Tyrone the Catholics have actually a majority of the population, but the County Council for some reason or another has a majority of Unionists and Protestants. The Catholics are 55 per cent. of the population, but they only hold 20 per cent. of the offices. In Fermanagh the Catholics are 38 per cent. of the population, and they only hold 23 per cent. of the paid offices. Surely these figures are a fair argument for me to use, and a powerful one. Here we have been held up for twenty years, not only as a people incompetent, but as a people who, if they got powers, would be intolerant and oppres-

sive to their Protestant fellow-countrymen. The Unionist Party passed the Local Government Act of 1898, and put powers into the hands of the people, and there is the result. If I wished to emphasize this further I might perhaps be allowed to say that even quite recently an eminent Protestant divine, Dr Meade, the present Bishop of Cloyne and Ross, speaking on a public occasion and proposing the health of the Lord-Lieutenant, used these words. He assured his Excellency that although they might differ in their politics and views, and had perhaps the name of being very strong politicians, notwithstanding all that they lived together in peace and goodwill, and were all lovers of their country. Let me read the statement made by the Moderator of the General Assembly of Presbyterians. The Rev. Dr M'Kean, speaking last June, said:

"The grazing system was doing more injury not only to the Presbyterian Church, but to the whole of the Irish people, than any other condition of things he had seen. His objection to the ranches was that they were kept covered with bullocks and men could not be seen in his district. He hoped this land would be cultivated, but declared that what Presbyterians had to do was to keep the manhood of the country in Ireland. Dealing with the attitude of the southern Catholics towards Presbyterians he said that all ministers in the south, with one or two exceptions, were unanimous in speaking highly of the toleration and goodwill shown towards them by those who differed from them in faith."

I claim, therefore, that that argument, drawn from alleged religious bigotry, has been utterly destroyed by the experience of the last twenty years. Another argument which was used was the alleged absolute irreconcilability of the landlords, gentry and professional classes—indeed, it might be held the whole of Ulster—on this question. The last twenty years have seen an extraordinary change going on in Ireland, and not the least remarkable change has been the change that has been going on in Ulster. Every man who reads the newspapers is aware of the fact that there has arisen in Ulster a new democratic body—the hon. Member for South Belfast will know what I mean

—a new democratic force which, if it does not come directly and fully to Home Rule, has at anyrate broken loose from the old official bearings, the old official moorings, and is every day gaining power and every day drifting into the direction of self-government by the Irish people. That force returned the hon. Member for West Belfast to this House; and that force, taking another form, returned the hon. Member for South Belfast. A change has even come over the old Orange Society which, twenty years ago, was united against us. In the Orange Society there are now two sections—one of them declaring itself in favour of the extension of self-government to the Irish people. Many people must have read a remarkable letter written to the papers the other day by the Grand Master of the Independent Order of Orangemen, Mr Lindsay Crawford, in which he said that

“The time had come for plain speaking on the part of all Ulster men who were interested in the settlement of the Irish questions, on lines that would devolve upon Irishmen within the bounds of Imperial unity the elementary right of self-government in Irish affairs.”

That change with regard to Home Rule is going on in Ireland amongst all sections of the people; and I venture to hold that if you could take a ballot to-morrow of the business men in Ireland—who are really now beginning to understand that there never will be a real trade and industrial revival except under self-government in Ireland—if you were to take a ballot to-morrow you would find almost, if not quite, that the majority of them are in favour of Home Rule. The same is true of the professional classes, and the same is true of the official classes. I wish the Chief Secretary would throw all official reticence on one side and tell us candidly what is the official opinion in Ireland. I have a shrewd suspicion that the overwhelming majority of the officials would far sooner see Home Rule set up on a sound basis in Ireland than be subject to the uncertainties, difficulties and miseries of the present system of government in that country. If you take the landlords:

everybody knows the change that has come over many of them on this question. I know that until the Land question is completely settled, and so long as we are in conflict with a large number of landlords on the question of price, compulsion and so forth—until these questions are set at rest—and God grant that they soon will be very rapidly set at rest—you cannot expect that landlords as a class will declare in favour of Home Rule. But it is not remarkable that so many of them have. Take, for instance, the hon. Member for the County of Carlow, who was elected the other day, without opposition, in an almost entirely Catholic constituency; he himself is not only a Protestant, not only a landlord, but the son of the ablest leader of the Irish landlords, who sat in this House, and who will be remembered by many hon. Members present—Mr Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh. And finally let me ask what has become of the remaining great argument of the Unionists against Home Rule, viz., that they had an alternative policy of their own. Yes. Their alternative policy was twenty years of resolute government. They have tried that policy out. They have had their twenty years. They tried it out under circumstances most advantageous to themselves, with the ablest Englishmen they could find administering in Ireland, with an overwhelming majority in this House. They have tried their policy, and what is the result? Why, during the whole twenty years Ireland was never governed by the constitution of this country. She was governed all the time by exceptional and coercive laws. The twenty years resulted in the reduction of the population by about 1,000,000, in the increase of taxation by over £2,000,000, and so far from settling the Irish national question, Ireland admittedly—and we will hear it in the debate used with wonderful effrontery against us—is, if anything, more disloyal to the present system of government than she was before. No; every remedy has been tried, but they have never weaned Ireland, nor coerced Ireland, from the national movement. Politics are very uncertain in this country. No one can foretell the result of a general election. Any day there may be a landslide

and one party may take the place of the other. The only thing sure about the politics of the three kingdoms is that at least eighty-five or eighty-six Irish representatives will be returned, time and time again, to this House, to declare, as we are declaring with one voice this afternoon, that nothing can settle the Irish question except a full measure of Home Rule. You were to convert her from Home Rule by twenty years of resolute government. But you have not converted Ireland from Home Rule; but you have, on the contrary, converted to Home Rule almost every man you ever sent there. It is interesting to look at the list of Viceroy's from the days of Lord Kimberley, who, as the opponent of a self-governing Ireland, ruled Ireland at the time of the Fenian outbreak; Lord Spencer, who went as a Unionist to Ireland, and ruled Ireland during the worst days of 1880 and 1881, down all through the list: Lord Carnarvon, Lord Aberdeen, to Lord Crewe, and last but not least, Lord Dudley. What has been their experience? I do not say they were all absolutely converted to my conception of Home Rule, but they have every one of them declared their distrust and their distaste of the present system of government in Ireland. Then take your Under-Secretaries and other high officials in Ireland—Sir Robert Hamilton, Sir West Ridgway, Sir Redvers Buller. Why, it is the same story right through. The men sent to convert us from Home Rule we have converted into enemies, at least I may say, of the present position and system of rule in that country. I do not want to detain the House much longer, but I would like to read to the House the simple declaration of Sir West Ridgway:

“I went to Ireland with an open mind free from bias, and there were soon impressed upon it certain facts. I quickly realised that the system was deficient and cumbersome, and that the gulf which yawned between the people and the Government could only be bridged by associating the people with the government of their own affairs.”

And he went on to say that he prepared a Memorandum in 1889, and submitted it to the Government, in which he

advocated the concession of a liberal measure of self-government, the decentralisation of finance, and the re-organisation of Dublin Castle. Then he recommended:

“Especially the abolition of that chaotic anachronism administered by semi-independent boards whereby three men do the work of one.”

I commend to the House his accurate description of the noble lord's Amendment. He said:

“The policy of the extreme Unionist is purely negative. That policy is to stand still and do nothing. Ireland is to rest and be thankful while the rest of Europe progresses and develops. Ireland is to be stationary—to remain stagnant—and if in the course of nature unhealthy ferment follows it is to be corrected by antiseptic coercion.”

That is a fair definition, I respectfully submit, of the meaning of the Amendment of the noble lord.

Now, I ask, what argument against Home Rule remains? Honestly I know of only one, and that is an argument which, put nakedly, would revolt the feelings of every man in this House—I mean the argument of fear—fear of the injury that Ireland, with her 4,000,000, might be able to do to this nation of over 40,000,000 if the Irish people had placed in their hands some measure of self-government. Sir, that argument is unworthy a great nation. It is said that Ireland is disloyal. So was Canada in 1837. Do you recollect the fact that on the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne the Government in this country directed that the *Te Deum* should be sung in the churches in the Colony of Canada in honour of the occasion, and that the Canadians rose *en masse* and left the churches, and they were actually fighting against this country with arms in their hands at the moment of the accession of the Queen? It is said, “Ireland is disloyal”; so was General Botha until you conceded to him the right of self-government. It is said, “Ireland is disloyal”; so was Canada, so was Australia, and so was the Transvaal when you attempted to take away their rights of self-government from them. I was talking a few months ago in this House to a

very distinguished Unionist member of it, and I put this argument candidly to him: I pointed out the similarity of the two races, the two creeds, the disloyalty and the turmoil that faced Lord Durham when he went out to Canada. I also pointed out the result of self-government, and I asked this distinguished gentleman: "What is your answer?" He said that there was only one answer, and that was to be found in the proximity of Ireland to Great Britain. He said to me: "What would happen if after Home Rule a foreign foe succeeded in landing in Ireland, and was received by a friendly population?" I asked him what reception he thought a foreign foe would get if he succeeded in landing now. And I asked him further how would it be more easy for a foreign foe to land on the shores of Ireland after Home Rule, after the people had been trusted, and so forth? He could not answer, because he had to admit that the Navy would still be in existence, and still be under your control and not ours. You would have your forces to prevent the invasion of Ireland then just as you have them now, but you would have this stronger force than any military or naval armaments. You would have the contentment which would spring from the breasts of a people whose rights of self-government had been conceded. But, after all, are not these very unworthy arguments and considerations for a great nation? Last year the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made a speech with reference to the cession of autonomy to the Transvaal which stuck in my memory, and which I have referred to on more than one occasion outside this House. He said:

"The history of our relations with our self-governing Colonies has been a great chapter in the history of freedom. The first part of that chapter began when freedom and union were thought to be incompatible—to be in rivalry with each other. Freedom won the day. Now we knew that freedom and union were not only compatible, but that they were inseparable. Freedom gave to the self-governing Colonies power to develop their countries, and, what was more, improved the special excellences of their race and character in the environment of the country in which they lived. That was a great gift—the

power to develop—which freedom gave. But it had another gift, namely, that of healing. In the history of one of our great Colonies we had already seen how it could heal wounds and strife, and bring races together, and we were confident in our latest self-governing Colony that the healing gift of freedom would be equally potent.”

Yes, those are two of the great gifts of freedom, the power to develop and the power to heal. These are the gifts that we are asking for Ireland, the power to develop for ourselves, in our own way, our own qualities. The power to develop for ourselves the resources of our own country; the power to strike off the minds of the youths of Ireland the chains that are there to-day, to free their hands and to enable them to develop their own characters and the resources of their own country. Whenever Ireland had that power, Ireland prospered; when she lost that power, Ireland declined. During the history of Grattan's Parliament, Irish industries, which had been deliberately and ruthlessly destroyed by the action of the English Parliament, had begun to revive, and then to flourish, but from the moment that the Union was carried that development was arrested, stagnation and decay came down like a poisonous mist over the land, and to-day Ireland, which is by nature a rich and fertile island, lags miserably behind in the hindmost rank of the progress of the world. We ask from you power to develop, we ask also the power to heal. There are many wounds to be healed in Ireland, and it may be said that although the wounds inflicted by this country in the past have been many and grievous, yet probably the deadliest wounds have been those inflicted by race or class hatred, and the religious dissensions of Ireland's own sons themselves. My answer to that is that every class hatred in Ireland, every discord, every feud has its origin in the past history of the government of Ireland by England. Give us the power to heal those feuds. Ireland herself alone can do it. So long as English ascendancy is associated with one creed in Ireland, with one class, and with one party, so long will the healing of these wounds be absolutely impossible. It

was the same in Canada. But, in consequence of the enlightened statesmanship of Lord Durham and the statesmen of that day, the blessed influence of freedom came along and united warring races and creeds. So will it be in Ireland, and all we ask from you, all I ask in this Resolution, is this: That what you have done for Frenchmen in Quebec, what you have done for Dutchmen in the Transvaal, you should now do for Irishmen in Ireland. In other words, you should trust the people, and the moment you do it, I believe in my heart and conscience, there and then, once and for all, you will have ended the blackest chapter in the history of your country.*

* Mr Redmond's resolution was carried with an amendment adding the words:—"Subject to the Supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament," by a majority of 313 to 157.

THE IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL

11th May 1908.

On 11th May 1908 Mr Birrell (Chief Secretary) introduced a Bill for the establishment of an Irish University in harmony with the wishes of the Catholic population of Ireland. Mr Birrell steered the Bill through the House of Commons with skill and tact, and it became law.

I NOTICE that it is always the scheme that is dead that is approved. "You praise the prophets that your fathers stoned and you stone the prophets of to-day." I understood the hon. gentleman to say that he prefers Mr Bryce's scheme. What does he mean by that? Does he mean that he would have supported that scheme or nothing of the kind? I gather that all he will say is that that is a better scheme, but he would have opposed it. I am sorry to have elicited that from the hon. gentleman, because I was going on to give him some credit for having made some advance and for being willing to go as far as Mr Bryce's scheme. But my object in rising is far different from this. I consider it desirable, and I think it is due to the Chief Secretary and to this House, to make plain at the earliest possible moment, and in the most direct and unequivocal manner, what is the attitude which the Irish party take up with regard to the main principles of this measure, speaking, as I claim they are entitled to do, for the general body of the Catholic people of Ireland. I said that as to the existence of this grievance I will not say many words, and as to the urgent need for the redress of that grievance for forty years at least, it has been admitted by the leading statesmen of both parties in this House that the majority of the people in Ireland have been suffering from a grievance in this matter.

It is thirty-five years since Mr Gladstone introduced his University Bill, and from that day to this various

Ministers have made various attempts to settle the question. Almost every leading statesman on one side or the other has admitted that the grievance existed, and the plain facts of the case admit of no doubt or controversy. The hon. gentleman who seconded the Amendment complained of a phrase used by my hon. friend the Member for the City of Cork about penal laws upon the intellect of young Irishmen in this matter of University education, and he tried to lead us to believe that these penal laws were really of their own making or of the making of the Church or the clergy of the Church to which they belonged. Why, the plain fact of the matter is that for over three hundred years, a small—a very small—minority of the people of Ireland have had the advantage of a highly-endowed University institution in the shape of Trinity College, Dublin, but the overwhelming majority of the population, 75 per cent. of the population, until recent years, have been denied facilities for University education altogether, and down to this hour are deprived of any real University institution deserving that name, except one to which their religious convictions make them object. The hon. gentleman says that they ought not to have these religious convictions, but surely in this matter if you attempt to decide what is right or wrong in the religious convictions of your neighbours you are exercising religious tyranny. If 75 per cent. of the people of Ireland have a religious objection to going to a Protestant denominational University institution, surely they are entitled to ask that an institution shall be provided to which they can go. The only University institution that has been open to them up to to-day has been the Royal University. That is only a University in name. The hon. Member has quoted copiously from the Reports of some of the recent Royal Commissions, but he has not quoted what the Royal Commission to whose authority he adverted has said about this Royal University. What did that Royal Commission say? It described the Royal University

“As an institution which suffered from incurable defects and which had lowered the ideal of University life and education in Ireland.”

While in Scotland you have four democratic Universities all in harmony with the religious feeling of the people, while you have in England a number of University institutions none of which are abhorrent to the religious opinions of the people in England, in Ireland there is practically none existing, except the Royal University, which is not a University at all, but a mere examining board. That is a grievance which has been admitted by both parties in the State and by all enlightened statesmen of the last thirty or forty years. Neither need I dwell upon the incalculable injury done to Ireland by the delay in the settlement of the question. It is unnecessary to point out the consequence of this denial of University facilities to the youth of Ireland. We have been repeatedly told from the Front Bench, when we complained that Englishmen and Scotsmen were given office in connection with the Government of Ireland—I never admitted it was a sufficient answer—that those in authority found it impossible to find men in Ireland qualified to fill those offices. In every walk of life Ireland has suffered from this want of University education. Now, Sir, this Bill undoubtedly affords a remedy. There have been many schemes proposed, and many advocated. There has been a good deal of difference among competent men as to what is the best scheme. We have various ideals: I do not say that I myself personally think this an ideal scheme. If I personally had the power to draft and carry a scheme it probably would be different in some essentials, perhaps in many, from this scheme, but let me point out how pathetic has been the attitude of the Catholics of Ireland upon this question. They have been willing all through the last thirty-five years to sink their individual preferences for this or that scheme. They have been willing to accept any scheme so long as it contained the vital essential principle of equality of treatment as between Catholics and Protestants in the matter of University education. I remember in 1889 when the Leader of the Opposition made his famous speech, in which he said that the Catholics must give up all idea of a University; that they should be content to take a college and not a Uni-

versity; and then laid down three hard-and-fast conditions which he said the Catholics must accept before his party would advocate that scheme. Well, Sir, the laity and clergy of Ireland accepted his conditions, and agreed to his proposals, and then his proposals were dropped and never heard of after. Then in 1904 Lord Dunraven brought forward a scheme—nominally it was Lord Dunraven's scheme, but it was well known it was put forward on behalf of the Government of that day, and had the sanction and the approval of the right hon. gentleman the Member for Dover. Again conditions were formulated and the men who did not approve of that particular scheme were approached. Concessions again were made, and all men, whatever their ideas, recognising in this scheme something which approached equality of treatment, sank their differences and accepted it, clergy and laity alike; once again that scheme was dropped and never heard of again. Then Mr Bryce proposed a scheme, and again there were differences of opinion as to whether it was the best or not, and again concessions were asked and again were made. Again men sank their differences of opinion, and all agreed—clergy and laity—to accept Mr Bryce's scheme, which we were told was the scheme of the Government. I think I am justified in saying on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland that though there may be differences of opinion as to whether this is precisely the best and most ideal scheme or not, if they can recognise in it, and I believe they do, the beginning, at anyrate, of a settlement of this University education question, and an element of equality, they will sink their differences and once again accept the scheme you propose. Is it to be conceived that under these circumstances any Members in this House, no matter how strong their views may be, will attempt to step in and, after all these generations of young Irishmen have gone out into the world unequipped for the struggle of life, owing to the unsettlement of this question, take the responsibility of standing between Ireland and this boon, as I believe it will be? I said the details of the matter had better be left to the committee. There is one detail only

that I will deal with, but it is a vital one. As I understand the finance of the Bill, no provision is made for the erection of a residential college. I speak my own view, and it is most strongly that that strikes at the very root of the matter. I take the view that the common life of the University which springs from residence is the most valuable part of University life. I confess I dread the idea of young men being brought up from all parts of Ireland to attend lectures in this new college and University, and instead of living in a residential college being scattered out in poor lodgings in back streets of the city. On this question I might also quote the authority of the Royal Commission. What will strike the imagination of the Irish people if there is no residential college? We are asking for equality. There in Trinity College, Dublin, before the eyes of the people, is the most magnificent residential college in the three Kingdoms. You propose to set up in Dublin a college without any residence whatever. Will that strike the people of Ireland as equality? The Royal Commission used these words:

“Unless what is done is done on an adequate and impressive scale it need not be done at all. It is necessary that in the majority of the buildings, the emoluments of the teachers and the equipment of the establishment, the institution should command respect and inspire enthusiasm.”

I most strongly urge upon the Government, and upon those responsible in particular for the finance of this Bill, that they should increase the finances so as to enable the building fund to include the building of residential quarters. Those who are interested in University education questions will remember Cardinal Newman's declaration upon this point. He went to the extreme of saying that he would rather have a University with residents and without teachers or lecturers or examiners at all, than the best teachers and lecturers and no University life. Let me read his words—they are very striking, and very short:

“I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called University which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence and gave its degrees to any person

who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a University which had no professor or examiners at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to the University which did nothing."

That is an extreme presentation of the view which I for one hold strongly, and which, I believe, is held strongly in Ireland, and I urge upon the Government, in the interests of equality and in the interest of the success of their scheme, to enlarge the building grants which are proposed, so as to enable them to build residential quarters. Let me say just one or two words now in answer to the two hon. gentlemen who have spoken. The hon. gentleman who moved the Amendment described this as the erection of a frankly denominational University, and a frank endowment of a particular religion. I cannot for the life of me understand what he means. My hon. friend the Member for East Mayo asked him what he meant, but he did not give a very precise or intelligible answer. Is this a denominational University—a University where there is no test for anybody, students, Senate, governing body or teachers, which is open to all classes, where there is no inducement to one man more than another to enter? The hon. gentleman failed altogether to substantiate his statement that you were holding out inducements to Catholics to go into the so-called Catholic College in Dublin—inducements which we are not to hold out to Protestants or members of any other creed—where there is no inducement to any particular student of a particular denomination to enter, where the governing body is elective, where there is no endowment whatever of any religious teaching, where the professors are freely chosen and elected by the Senate, and where, even in the case of dismissal, there is a power of appeal to a board of visitors. On that point I ought to safeguard myself by saying I think the provision of the Bill on this matter is far too stringent and is most un-

satisfactory. If I understood the hon. gentleman rightly, what he meant by a denominational University was an institution in which the atmosphere was denominational. How is he going to get away from that? Is there any University which by that test is not a denominational University? According to that test Trinity College is a denominational University, and so are Queen's College, Belfast, the Scottish Universities, and Oxford and Cambridge. You established a University at Khartoum the other day. I am sure the majority of students attending it are Mohammedans, and it has a denominational atmosphere. I was amazed at reading a letter the other day from a very eminent Presbyterian, County Court Judge Shaw. Here is what he said, after having reminded the Presbyterians that they had been battling for half a century for an undenominational or non-sectarian system, and that they had got it embodied in the right hon. gentleman's Bill:

"The undenominational system is all right, it appears, as long as it is worked by a majority of Protestants, but all wrong when it is worked by a majority of Catholics."

In that sense this college in Dublin will have a denominational atmosphere. The majority of the students going there will be Catholics. You cannot help it. If the majority of the people in Ireland who are deprived of University facilities happened to be Mohammedans or Buddhists the institution would take their colour; but because the majority in Ireland happen to be Catholic, to say that you are in the name of undenominationalism to refuse to give an institution which has no tests, and which has the other characteristics that I have mentioned, seems to me an inconsistent and an unworthy attitude to take up. This scheme is not all that we have asked for. At one time or another the Catholics of Ireland have asked a good deal more than is contained in this Bill. In some respects I hope we shall be able to amend and enlarge it, but it will create a beginning. It will create a free University institution to which the Catholic youth of the country can

freely go. It will open at last the gates of University education for the mass of common men in Ireland. Believing as I do that after freedom there is nothing more precious to a nation than enlightenment, my colleagues and I will accept the Bill, and after discussion in Committee upon these points, and other points of a similar character, will do all in our power to have it passed into law.

CRIME IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND

House of Commons, 23rd February 1909.

The Government was attacked by the Unionist party because the Chief Secretary (Mr Birrell) refused to adopt a policy of coercion in dealing with disturbances in certain parts of the country, preferring to rely on the ordinary law. His decision was amply justified by events.

I HAVE risen not to defend the Government, but to defend Ireland. Now, what is the accusation?

The Resolution which has been moved is a demand for the abrogation of the ordinary law in Ireland, the suspension of trial by jury, and of the most cherished portions of the British Constitution, and the revival of coercion. The terms of the Amendment which have actually been moved by the noble lord are mild as milk compared to the accusation in the terms in which it was made on hundreds of platforms within the last few months in the country.

I would like to put before the House the accusation which has been made in the country, and I propose to quote from two speeches, one made by the right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin, who spoke to-night, and the other from the other Member for the University of Dublin, the ex-Solicitor-General for England, who spoke upon this subject several times recently.

What was the accusation made by the right hon. gentleman in the country? It was not that there was boycotting here and there in Ireland, that there was an increase of cattle-driving, or that there was an increase in some isolated portions of the country of offences of firing farms. Nothing of the kind. His speech was an indictment of the whole of the Irish nation. Here is what he said, as reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of 29th June last—because the agitation has been going on for some months:

“Speaking with every sense of responsibility, he (Mr Campbell) said that in at least three out of the four provinces of Ireland the law of the King was dead. The only law that was enforced was the law of the United Irish League, whose only decrees were merciless and cruel boycotting and intimidation, varied in many cases by murder and attempted murder, and by night shooting and mutilations of cattle and every conceivable form of crime and outrage.”

He did not dare make that accusation to-day, when he was face to face with the representatives of Ireland and with the House of Commons. His accusation was of a very different kind; and I ask hon. Members who heard the report from the police in Ireland read by the Chief Secretary, who heard the best and the worst that could be said with reference to the state of crime in Ireland, to judge of what sense of responsibility this ex-Attorney-General has when he goes down to the country and makes a speech like that I have just quoted.

But the ex-Solicitor-General for England was not to be outdone. What does he (Sir Edward Carson) say? Speaking at Maidstone, only the other day, the 19th February, he describes the condition of Ireland as

“a disgrace and a scandal. The King’s Speech mentioned the Balkans, but not a word about Ireland. While they were talking about affairs in the Balkans the most disgraceful crimes and outrages were going on at their own doors, and speaking with full responsibility he did not believe that a parallel to the condition of affairs in Ireland was to be found at the present moment in any part of the world.”

Neither of the right hon. gentlemen whom I am quoting dared to make those assertions to-day in the House of Commons. But in the country they draw this picture, and represent, among other things, that the disturbance and lawlessness extend over twenty-two counties in Ireland—twenty-two counties.

Now the representation is that murders, attempts at murder, mutilation of cattle, and—mark the phrase—“every conceivable form of crime and outrage” are rife over three out of the four provinces in Ireland.

The right hon. gentleman (Mr Campbell), more than

once during his speech said that history repeats itself. Well, indeed it does in Ireland. Almost this very day seventy years ago—just think of what your Union has meant for Ireland, for seventy years you have been discussing the same subject, this question of coercion and crime—almost to the very day this time seventy years ago there was a great debate initiated in this House, at the commencement of the Session, on the question of Irish crime and coercion. Mr Thomas Drummond was Under-Secretary then at Dublin Castle. He was attacked, as the Chief Secretary has been attacked here to-night, not because there was an increase of serious crime, because, as I will show in a few minutes, there has been a decrease of crime in Ireland; and in Drummond's time, when that debate took place, there was also a decrease.

Why then? Because Drummond, like the right hon. gentleman, discarded coercion and insisted on governing Ireland by the ordinary law.

Yes, and that debate was inaugurated by the Member for Trinity College of the day. Mr Shaw, Recorder of Dublin, was Member for Trinity College at that time, and he initiated the debate. And I assure you, if you read that debate, as I have read it within the last couple of days, you will find, from beginning to end, exactly the same tone, the same character of talk, and all manifestly animated by the same motive—to attack the man who dares try and govern Ireland by the ordinary law.

In that debate there was a remarkable speech made by Daniel O'Connell. Daniel O'Connell did not mince his words; and I can quote from him words addressed to the Members for Trinity College in that day which I am afraid you would not allow me to address to the Member for Trinity College at this moment.

AN HON. MEMBER: Although they deserve it just the same.

Here are his words. Mr O'Connell said:

“There was one feature in this debate that would be remembered. Speeches had been made by four gentlemen, natives of Ireland, who, it would appear, came here for the sole purpose

of vilifying their native land and endeavouring to prove that it was the worst and most criminal country on the face of the earth. Yes, you came here to calumniate the country that gave you birth. It is said, Mr Speaker, that there are some soils which produce venomous and crawling creatures, things odious and disgusting. Oh, yes, you may hiss, but you cannot sting. For my part your calumnies cannot diminish my regard for my country; your malevolence cannot blacken it in my estimation, although it is your vices and crimes, or the vices and crimes of men such as you, that have produced the results in Ireland to-day."

History, I agree with the right hon. Member for Dublin University, does repeat itself. The picture the right hon. gentleman has drawn—because, of course, he is the accuser, and not the noble lord who moved the Amendment, whose speech was mild as milk compared with that of the right hon. Member for Dublin University—that picture is an absolutely false one. He has made a serious charge against Ireland; I make a counter charge against him and his confederates. There is a deliberate conspiracy on foot in this country to libel a nation to serve the ends of the disunited and distracted Tory party.

By comparison with England, Ireland at this moment is in a state of almost absolute crimelessness.

We are asked to say that coercion should be applied to Ireland, because she is seething with crime in three out of four provinces. I will show that if the present state of Ireland is a reason for applying coercion there is ten times greater reason for applying coercion to England. I hope hon. Members representing English constituencies will not accuse me of doing anything wrong in calling attention to the state of crime in England; but we are the people attacked. We are not attacking England; we are only defending ourselves.

Let me institute a comparison in all classes of serious crime. I shall quote no figures except those taken from the official criminal statistics, which I have personally verified.

Take murder first. During the last twenty years there have been 3000 cases of murder in England. In those cases only 1309 persons were brought to justice, and of those only 551 were convicted.

Is there anything like that to be found in the criminal statistics of Ireland? Take the last four or five years in particular. (I ought to state that the criminal statistics for England do not come out so soon as those for Ireland; they are a year later.)

In the last four years in England we find that, not including infanticides, there were 389 murders; in the last four years in Ireland there were 51. There has been no agrarian murder in Ireland for years—for three or four years, at least—until the unfortunate occurrence the other day in Craughwell, to which I shall allude in a moment. In London alone—which I know is not a fair comparison, but I have given the figures for the whole of England—there were during the last three years 92 murders and 2094 attempted murders.

I am prepared to prove from the official statistics, which I have in my possession, that for several years past there has been a serious increase in all forms of serious crime in England.

If you take the annual average of the various classes of crime to be found in the latest published judicial statistics for England, and compare the annual average for the period 1902-06 with any preceding period, you will find an increase in the average of cases of murder, attempted murder, intimidation, cruelty to children, attempts to commit unnatural offences, offences against girls under sixteen, burglaries, house and shop-breaking, larcenies of horses and cattle, killing and maiming cattle, and other malicious injuries to property.

Taking offences against the person, the principal increases have been in the following offences, namely, felonious wounding, malicious wounding, intimidation, procuring abortion, and so forth; and also in all classes of sexual offences there has been a large increase.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is that for London alone?

No; these figures are for all England. It would not be fair to take London alone. London could be compared only with great cities such as Belfast or Dublin. I will take one class of crime which is not a pleasant thing to

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talk about; but when an attempt is made to blacken the moral character of Ireland by representing it as seething with crime, we are bound to defend her.

Take sexual offences, a class of crime which is on the increase in England. If you turn to the corresponding tables in the Irish statistics, you find in many cases an absolute blank under these headings, notwithstanding the great populations congregated together in Belfast, Dublin and other cities.

Take, for instance, unnatural offences. The annual average in England from 1902 to the latest statistics available was 58; in Ireland for the same period it was 2·6. The average number of attempts to commit unnatural offences in England during the same period was 165, and in Ireland 6·2. The Commissioners who prepared these statistics make the following statement in their report:

“Indictable offences show that there was a fall (in England) from 1893 to 1895, that crime was stationary from 1895 to 1899, with the exception of a slight temporary movement upwards in 1898, and that there has been a continuous rise, with one exception (1902), since 1900.”

Taking the same classification of crimes, let us see what has been going on in Ireland, that country whose rapidly-increasing criminality demands a Coercion Act.

Taking the annual average for the years 1903-07, as compared with any of the preceding periods, there is a great decrease in every class of serious crime. The numbers, which have gone up in England, have gone down in Ireland, of cases of murder, manslaughter, felonious wounding, malicious wounding, intimidation and molestation, arson, killing and maiming of cattle, malicious injuries, assaults on constables, and ordinary assaults and drunkenness.

I have quoted the years 1903 to 1907 inclusive, year by year; during the same period of years they have gone up in England. I might also go through England by counties. It may seem invidious to English Members to do this, but I do not apologise at all.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY: Let us have a Crimes Act for England.

Here is one consistent man who says, "Let us have a Crimes Act for England." I look forward to the day when he proposes it. I look forward to the day when any English Government proposes it. England would make shorter work with that Government than in any political crisis in the past.

Let me take one or two counties; and, lest I should be accused of unfair comparisons, I shall take an English county which is purely agricultural, and where there are no great cities—the county of Norfolk.

We have no official statistics for 1908, but I have a letter written, on 1st February 1909, to the local newspapers by a gentleman in Norwich, Mr Theo. P. Starke, College Road, Norwich, in which he gives a list which he has carefully collected from all the public law reports of the offences committed in the county of Norfolk during 1908.

It is a long list, and I will not read them all. There was only one case of murder. There were 60 cases of assaults on the police, 35 cases of beating and kicking of wives, 127 cases of violent personal assault and injury, and 52 cases of malicious damage to property. There was a total indictable offence list for that one county of 1762.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is a Radical county.

I really was not aware that it was a Radical county. London is not a Radical county, and there is more serious crime in London in one month than in Ireland in a year.

The indictable offences for the whole of Ireland, including the cities of Belfast, Dublin and Cork, were only 9000. The total of indictable offences for the whole of England was 94,654 as against 9000 for Ireland.

Let me take a couple of Irish counties—and I shall not be accused of taking one of those counties which, according to the police, are altogether free from disturbance and offence of any sort. Let me take the county of Clare. At last Quarter Sessions in that county the Judge, speaking in Ennis, said:

AN HON. MEMBER: Name.

Are you attacking the judges now? If the hon. gentleman is so ignorant that he does not know the names of the judges, he had better go to the library and find out. It does not matter whether the judge is a Liberal or a Conservative. The judge was probably telling the truth when he was speaking about the number of cases he was going to try. He said:

"There was only one case of assault to go before the grand jury. It was a matter for congratulation that in that wide district there was but a single offence for trial—that there was not a single offence against property. The only offence before them was in the nature of an assault. He thought it was a matter of congratulation that, so far as ordinary crime was concerned, Clare—and he believed the same remark applied to all Ireland—compared favourably with any district or country in the world."

At the same Quarter Sessions in Limerick there was an interesting ceremony, where the High Sheriff said:

"It was his very pleasant duty, the first in connection with his official capacity as High Sheriff, to ask his Honour to accept a pair of white gloves as emblematic of the peaceful condition of the city and its immunity from crime. The pleasure was all the more enhanced when they recollected that that presentation was not of an isolated character, but was of very frequent occurrence. His Honour had been pleased to accept on three different occasions already similar testimonies of the peaceful condition of the city, and his predecessor had very frequently been the recipient of similar presentations. The pleasure was further enhanced when they considered that the learned judge who presided at the recent Connacht Assizes also referred to the immunity of the city from crime."

I do not wish to burke the case which has been made, such as it is. It will be said, "Oh! it is true, although Ireland is seething in crime, still it is true that in all those serious offences, murder and attempted murder, arson, attacks on the person and property, and cattle-maiming, there is no increase, but, on the contrary, a diminution; still there has been an increase in two offences, known as cattle-driving and offences with firearms."

Now I would ask, in regard to this indictment of Ire-

land, what right have you to take out two particular offences, which, you say, are not familiar in England, and to say that because these two offences have shown an increase in Ireland, therefore there is such a state of lawlessness and crime as to necessitate a Coercion Act? Is cattle-driving more criminal or inhuman than murder, or wife-beating, or cattle-maiming? No coercion is asked for England, except by the hon. baronet, by reason of the steady increase for years past in all those offences.

Let me examine those two particular offences in Ireland a little more closely.

What is cattle-driving?

The Chief Secretary rightly said it was a new offence. What is its origin? I have no hesitation in stating my opinion what its origin is. It would be most unjust and untruthful to say that it is the result, intended or contemplated, of the Land Act of 1903. No; it is, in my opinion, the direct result of the failure in certain parts of Ireland of the working of the Act.

We were promised when that Act was introduced that it would deal with congestion.

We were promised that it would deal with the breaking up of grass-lands.

When we wanted to move Amendments in Committee giving compulsory powers to deal with this question, we were put off by the right hon. gentleman the Member for Dover, who assured us that the powers in his Bill, in his judgment, would be sufficient to deal with these congested communities in the west, and the breaking up of the grass-lands, and we did not present our Amendments. The promise made in the speeches during the debates on the Bill of 1903 raised to the highest pitch the expectation of the people in certain parts of Ireland.

We know that in those particular parts of Ireland where the land question was not nearly so pressing as in the west it worked smoothly and rapidly; but not so in the congested districts. That was admitted by everyone; and when the Government appointed a Royal Commission under Lord Dudley to inquire into the reason why the

promises made under the Act of 1903 had not been fulfilled, the people of Ireland remained patient and quiescent. There was no disturbance or cattle-driving until year by year passed over without any working of the Act, or without any hope of getting any Amendment by legislation.

I honestly believe that if the Dudley Commission had issued their report a year before they did, cattle-driving would probably not have come into existence, or, at all events, it would not have caused serious anxiety.

That is my account of the origin of cattle-driving, and it is borne out by the Chief Secretary, who says that within the last few months, since the new Land Bill was introduced, cattle-driving has so diminished that last week there was practically none. This proves my point that cattle-driving was owing to the disappointment of these people in getting no remedy for the grievances which they were promised when the 1903 Bill was passed.

I have never advocated cattle-driving; but if anybody says it is to be mentioned in the same breath with the crimes committed in England, I say it is a slander. These men may be misguided, and they may break the law, but criminals in the ordinary sense of the word they are not.

With regard to the offence of firing arms into houses, I have myself the strongest possible objection to the indiscriminate carrying of concealed arms. I believe this ought not to be allowed in any country, except under extreme regulations. I will not tolerate the insult which is offered to my nation in forbidding Ireland to bear arms when arms may be borne in England with impunity. But so far, I say, as the indiscriminate carrying of concealed arms is concerned, I am entirely against it, in Ireland or in England.

With regard to this offence connected with arms, I admit there has been an increase, and I deplore it. I agree with the Chief Secretary that firing into houses is a cowardly offence, and there is no step I would not take to stop it. It is a most cowardly offence. I am glad to think that it is not widespread, or that it has not resulted in the loss of life or in serious injury to limb. These firings have, after all,

not caused any deaths, or any serious woundings, and the number for the whole of Ireland is ridiculously small. There are $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people in Ireland, and there are 148 of these offences. Well, 148 is not a great deal for the whole of Ireland. There was a total for the last five years in London of 331 offences committed with firearms. You will find that in Ireland the number is insignificant compared with the number in England.

As to cattle-maiming, it is not possible for any man to mention that offence without exciting abhorrence. It is absolutely abhorrent to the feelings of any human being. It is abhorrent to the universal sentiment of the people of Ireland. There were twenty-two cases last year. That is, in the whole of Ireland. Those twenty-two cases were a great reproach to Ireland.

But when we are told that because of those twenty-two cases in the whole of Ireland the ordinary law should be suspended and Coercion substituted, I reply by pointing to the parallel cases in England. There was all over England, in 1908, an epidemic of cattle-maiming. Let me give some of the cases.

In February, at Chatham, a horse was brutally ill-treated, and the affair was aggravated by the fact that a number of horses in an adjoining stable had suffered in a similar manner. Yet no one was brought to justice.

In the same month, at Jarring Neville, in Sussex, there were three maiming outrages. The local paper says: "The investigations of the police have brought to light the fact that a strange man was seen along the river bank close to the field in which the maimed cattle were grazing," and it goes on to say that this was the same district in which another outrage of the kind took place previously.

Again no one was made amenable.

In February, in Grimsby, there commenced a series of cattle-maiming outrages, which went on intermittently from February to September, and I make the statement here that in that district of Grimsby alone there were as many cattle-maiming outrages as in the whole of Ireland that year.

The *South Wales Echo* of 3rd February 1908 says:

"The Grimsby police are investigating another mysterious outrage which has been perpetrated at the slaughter-house of Mr J. Bushe.

"A few months ago Mr Bushe's slaughter-house in Bridge Street was broken into and a beast killed. Its body was hacked and slashed in such a way as to make it unsaleable.

"While the police were hunting for the offenders, the killing-house was broken into and a bull, value £50, was killed by the visitors, and the carcass rendered useless.

"On Saturday two pigs were found dead in the same house, having been beaten to death with a pole-axe. Their bodies were bruised and slashed horribly, and had to be destroyed."

No one has been made amenable.

The *Daily News* of 23rd March 1908 says:

"In March two extraordinary maiming outrages occurred in Norfolk. The first took place on the farm of Mr Larwood, at Swaffham, who discovered one of his sheep dead, and mutilated in a fiendish fashion, portions on some adjacent hurdles. A second case was reported from Sporle in the same district, where a sheep owned by Mr Thomas S. Matthews had been partly skinned and the carcass dragged about a field immediately next the main road, and then flung under a hedge. The owners have offered substantial reward likely to lead to the detection of the perpetrators of the outrage."

No one has been made amenable.

Then, I have an article here from the *News of the World*, 19th April 1908, describing some extraordinary brutal mutilations of dumb animals, cattle and horses, at Bidston Golf Links, Bidston Moss, near Liverpool.

The article commences by referring to the Great Wyrley outrages in Staffordshire of the year before:

"Everyone will remember the succession of maiming that occurred in 1907, when animal after animal was mutilated."

It then describes how a number of lambs, owned by Mr Evans, of Bidston Hall, were grazing on the Moss, where the shepherd, on his rounds in the morning, found some of their bodies mutilated and lying on the grass; and then there is a description of the brutality practised on those animals.

In May, the next month, I have an article from the *Daily News*, 30th May 1908, which says:

"A series of cattle-maiming outrages at Eye Green, near Peterborough, are causing alarm and indignation amongst the farmers of the district. They are similar to those at Great Wyrley. The latest case is that of a young bullock found on Mrs Fowler's farm with its head nearly hacked off, both sides of the neck having been slashed, apparently by a strong arm, with a long knife."

The one case of cattle-maiming in Ireland we were referred to to-day was where a bullock's head was hacked off. Here is a case at your own door. Why do you not say that there should be coercion for Peterborough?

"In the same district sheep belonging to Mr T. Roberts and Mr Little have also been found ripped up, and within two years Mr Little had another sheep so mutilated that it had to be slaughtered. Mr F. W. Griffin, the Shire horse breeder, had a sheep barbarously killed upon his farm. The police have no clue to the perpetrators of the outrages."

Then I come on to September:

"The Staffordshire police report yet another maiming outrage. An aged mare belonging to Thomas Springthorp, Darlaston, was found shockingly mutilated in a field adjoining the main road, where it had been put to graze the previous night. The animal was alive, bleeding from a frightful gash in the flank, extending ten inches in length, inflicted with some sharp instrument. The animal was so badly mutilated that it has since been killed."

No one was brought to justice.

Then the record goes back to Grimsby, to the 10th of August 1908:

"The fifth case of cattle-maiming within a few months has occurred at the slaughter-house of Mr Bushe, a Grimsby butcher. On four previous occasions cows and pigs were horribly mutilated and killed. A reward was offered by the Grimsby Butchers' Association, and the police were very active, but the culprit has never been discovered. On Saturday night another visit was paid to the slaughter-house, but there were no cows there. In an adjacent stable, however, was a valuable horse

belonging to Mr Toogood, corn factor. The animal was found this morning cut in nine distinct places on the flanks, each wound being about five inches long. The maimers left no clue, and no arrests have been made."

I do not want to prolong this thing. I might continue it indefinitely. Let me give one case more, a mixed case of both arson and cattle-maiming. On 16th August last there commenced in the neighbourhood of Dunstable a series of malicious burnings, which went on night after night for nearly a fortnight. Here is the list as published in the *Sunday Chronicle*, 4th October 1908:

"August 26th, Mr Barton's farm, two ricks burned, damage £60.

"August 25th, Mr P. J. Lautz's grocer's shop burned down, damage £200.

"September 13th, Wesleyan Church, Dunstable, burnt, damage £10,000.

"September 22nd, Mr Henry Brown's Kingsbury Farm, Church Street, eleven ricks burnt, damage £1000.

"September 22nd, Mr Barton's farm (second time), two ricks burnt, damage £80.

"September 30th, Mr Fossey's Buttercup Farm, eleven ricks, pigs and one heifer burnt, damage £1000.

"September 30th, Mr Thomas J. Cook's farm, Brewer's Hill, three ricks burnt, damage £60.

"October 1st, Mr A. A. Allison's farm, Little Gaddesden."

And so on, day after day, in the same small neighbourhood, and not one single person was ever brought to justice for one of those crimes.

And there you have a record, only an imperfect record, compiled simply from the newspapers, of cattle-maiming outrages of the most cruel and barbarous character, infinitely more numerous than the 22 cases in Ireland; and yet you are asked, because these 22 cases occurred in Ireland in 1908, to say that we are practically a nation of savages, and unfit for the exercise of the ordinary law.

I hope that English Members who have been listening to me, perhaps Members for those very constituencies, will not imagine I have risen for the purpose of throwing mud upon their constituents. I am not saying that those out-

rages, horrible as they are, are possible of avoidance in a great country like this. I do not know. They are regrettable, at anyrate; but I found no charge upon them. I do not say that the people of England should have their liberty taken away from them and coercion imposed upon them as a result. We have been attacked, and in our defence I quote them; but I say, when you have at your own doors a worse state of things than exist in Ireland, it is a monstrous insult to say that the ordinary law should be taken away from us and coercion used in its place.

Let me deal for one moment with the particular case mentioned—that of Craughwell.

The Craughwell murder was a horrible offence, but happily it was an isolated case. As I pointed out, for three or four years there were no agrarian murders in Ireland at all. Speaking in the House of Lords the other day, Lord Lansdowne, who, one would have thought from his experience and from his position, would feel the responsibility attaching to his words, said:

“And finally we have a murder in broad daylight of a wretched constable in discharge of his duties, a murder which apparently was regarded with enthusiastic approbation by the people of the neighbourhood.”

I stigmatise that as a cruel and reckless libel upon the people of that neighbourhood.

Nothing could by any possibility be more untrue. From the day on which that murder was committed to this moment the people, through every organ they possess, have expressed their horror and indignation. I read that:

“Very strong denunciations of the murder were delivered at the Masses yesterday in Craughwell and Ballymonagh. Speaking with much feeling at Craughwell Church, Father Quinn denounced all outrages, and said the recent one involving the loss of the life of an innocent policeman was the worst of all that had happened during his connection with the parish. The perpetrators of the outrage, he pointed out, had nothing to gain by taking away the life of an innocent man; Father Quinn warned parents to guard their children from the dangers of secret societies.”

The Rev. Father Davoren spoke at other Masses in Craughwell and Ballymonagh, and denounced this murder in the most vigorous terms. The Member for the district, Mr Wm. Duffy, M.P., also spoke of the murder.

"He expressed disgust and horror at the awful occurrence. The officials of the United Irish League in the district equally deplore the outrage, and it cannot be too strongly emphasised that the shooting has no political significance whatever. The fact that Mrs Ryan's right to the farm was acknowledged at the meeting of the Executive of the League is sufficient to show that the present trouble is confined to a small radius, and acts of violence command no sympathy from the vast majority of the people."

In the face of these facts, which ought to have been known to Lord Lansdowne, I stigmatise again as a wicked and reckless libel his statement that this murder was received with approbation by the people of the district.

Murders of this kind are of rare occurrence in Ireland. In the last ten years I wonder if the House will be surprised to hear seventeen policemen were killed on duty in the streets of London, and that the annual average of constables assaulted in the discharge of their duty in England, for the period 1902-6, was 10,577.

In Ireland occurrences of this kind are most rare. Let me quote an authority which will be listened to with respect on these Benches. The late Colonel Howard Vincent went over to Ireland with a small Commission to inquire into the conditions of the Police Constabulary, and a case was made before him that they ought to get largely increased pay because of the excessive risk they ran in the discharge of their duty. And what does he say in his Report?

"Some of the witnesses asserted that the duties of the Irish Constabulary are more dangerous than those of the police in England. We are not in possession of statistics showing the retirements from the English forces caused by injuries received in the execution of duty. In the Royal Irish Constabulary during the last ten years only seven men have retired from the Force owing to injuries so received: that is not one per cent. out of a Force varying from 12,000 to 10,000 men."

It would appear that the proportion in England is much higher. The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire stated in evidence that the duties of the police in his county are very arduous and involve great risks, that he has had several men murdered during his twenty-five years' connection with the force.

"In Birmingham, which has a force of 700 men, pensions are being paid to five men who retired during the last ten years owing to injuries received on duty. In 1897 a constable was killed on duty in that city. The crime of burglary, which is so common in England, also adds considerably to the danger attached to the discharge of police duties in the country. It is a well-known fact that on many occasions policemen in England, in encounters, often single-handed, with armed burglars, have either lost their lives or have been so injured as to become permanently disabled."

Then the Commissioners go on to declare that the risk run by constables in discharge of their duty in Ireland is far less than in England, and the Report winds up with the significant statement of the reason:

"Because it may be said, practically speaking, that there are no criminal classes in Ireland."

I claim respectfully to have proved first of all that crime generally in England is greater in proportion to population than it is in Ireland, and that that is especially true of the more serious classes of crime.

I profess to have proved from the official statistics that crime in England is increasing, and has been for several years past, and especially increasing in the serious classes of crime; that in Ireland, in the same years, crime generally has been decreasing in the serious classes.

And I say seriously that if increases in cattle-driving or increases in offences committed with firearms not leading to maiming, wounding, or murder, or if increases in boycotting are to be held as a justification for coercion in Ireland, where generally there is a state of crimelessness, surely an increase in attempts to murder, in cattle-maiming, in wife-beating, and other horrible offences of that kind

in this country should make a conclusive case in favour of the abolition of trial by jury and the creation of tribunals of two resident magistrates here in England.

I assert that the attempt to hold up Ireland as seething with "every form of crime and outrage," which is the phrase used—to hold up Ireland as in the throes of "a saturnalia of crime," as the noble lord said who moved this Amendment, is in itself a dastardly outrage to the whole Irish nation.

The truth is that the whole of this campaign is a mere political dodge. These distinguished statesmen here have got to try to find some issue upon which confederates and others can unite, and it seemed to their great minds that a campaign of calumny and slander against Ireland was the easiest.

But the campaign of slander will not succeed. They may go down the country and tell these falsehoods for English platforms; but we will follow them, and wherever they go and repeat those slanders, I or one of my colleagues will ask the hospitality of some English platform to answer them.

Mr JAMES CAMPBELL: You will have a busy time.

I thank the right hon. gentleman for his admission that if we are to answer all their calumnies we shall have a busy time. Let me put one other consideration before the House. There is something more to be said about the administration of the law in Ireland than has ever been touched upon by any speaker in this debate.

The most serious feature in the Ireland of to-day is the absence of respect for the law and of confidence in the administration of justice. The right hon. gentleman has said "Hear, hear." That is the monument to your hundred years of rule from this country. At the end of a hundred years of the Union there is an absence of respect for the law and a deep-rooted disgust at the administration of justice in Ireland. We heard nothing about this in the debate this afternoon.

For my part, I know of no greater condemnation for any Government than the statement that under its rule law is

held in disesteem and the administration of justice is suspected and distrusted. That is the case in Ireland.

Yes; I admit it. It has been the case ever since you commenced your rule in Ireland. And what is the cause?

I do not think anybody will repeat the reasons we used to hear twenty years ago, which were summed up by Mr Gladstone in his remark that some people imagined that the Irish had a double dose of original sin. No one to-day will say that the law is disrespected and the administration of justice is suspected in Ireland because the Irish are by nature a law-breaking race, incapable of being law-abiding citizens. You cannot say that, because the whole history of your Empire proves the contrary. In every portion of this Empire, outside Ireland, Irishmen show respect for the law, and have confidence in the administration of justice.

And go outside your Empire, and follow them into other lands. Who are the most law-abiding citizens in the United States of America to-day? I say freely, and I would say the same on any American platform, the Irish emigrants.

It is not because the Irish are by nature incapable of being law-abiding citizens. No. The reason is that the law for them in their own land has not only always come to them in a foreign garb—to use Mr Gladstone's phrase—but has been to them all through the century a weapon of oppression and injustice. The administration of the law in Ireland has been polluted at its very source. To this hour I admit it is deeply distrusted by the people of Ireland.

Does this House remember the history of that young man who was put upon his trial on a charge of maiming a cow—a horrible charge—and who pleaded guilty in the dock, and was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, and who was found out in about two years afterwards by the right hon. Member for Dover (Mr Wyndham) to have been an innocent man?

There was a certain Sergeant Sheridan, a police sergeant, who arrested two or three men on a charge of cattle-maiming. It was on his evidence that they were con-

victed, one of them after a trial, and the second one, as I said, pleading guilty. Sheridan's conduct came under the suspicion of the Castle, and, let me say, to the credit of the right hon. gentleman the Member for Dover, if he never did anything else in connection with Ireland, his action in this matter was a credit and an honour to him. He did not cloak Sheridan. He investigated the case, and proved conclusively that Sheridan himself was the man who committed the outrage, and that his oath, on which these men were convicted, was false. One of the poor men died, but the others were released.

Why do I recall that story to your mind? Not to emphasize the iniquity of this police constable at all, but to make this point. Here you find a respectable young man charged with one of the most horrible offences possible, and when he is in the dock such profound mistrust has he in the administration of justice that he actually pleads guilty, thinking that he would get a lesser sentence than if he protested his innocence. That throws an awful light upon the state of things in Ireland; and, believe me, that is the serious aspect of Irish crime and of the administration of the law which the House of Commons ought to turn its attention to instead of talking this pestilent nonsense about coercion.

Then there is the system of promotion to the Bench for partisan political service, the system of jury-packing, the everlasting exceptional coercion law, and the use of the famous Statute of Edward III. for political offences. Here I blame the Chief Secretary, because he spoke this afternoon of this Statute of Edward III. as if it were part of the ordinary law of the country. I would remind him that the law is used in this country solely for dealing with tramps and vagabonds; and I would like to see any Minister attempt to put that same law in force against a newspaper editor or a political opponent in England. These things prevent the law in Ireland from being respected and the Administration from being trusted.

That is the real problem, and not this question of coercion. How is all that to be changed?

I agree that there never can be real safety, freedom and happiness in Ireland until the law is respected and the administration of justice is trusted. How can that be brought about?

It cannot be brought about by coercion, because you have been trying that for a whole century. I admire the hardihood of the noble lord when he referred to "twenty years of resolute government." I cannot conceive how he was so hardy as to mention it. But his twenty years of resolute government are over, and yet to-night you are carrying on a debate precisely similar to that which you carried on seventy years ago.

There is only one way of changing all this, and that is by adopting the same methods as you have applied elsewhere throughout your Empire.

This is not a new situation. When Lord Durham was sent to Canada he found precisely the same state of things as that which exist in Ireland to-day. Perhaps the House will allow me to read a few words from the Report sent to Lord Gosport, in October 1837, by the Attorney-General of the day:

"A system of proscription, based upon national distinctions and political prejudices, was adopted and pursued. The British inhabitants and those loyal Canadians who adhered to the political principles of their British fellow-subjects perceived on a sudden that all intercourse between them and those of their neighbours who professed a different political opinion was studiously denied; all interchange of the ordinary offices or the common necessities of life had abruptly terminated: they had incurred the penalty of social excommunication."

Then there is the question of firing into houses and cattle-driving, and on this the Report says:

"Mobs assembled by night, and with shouts of intimidation and threats of personal violence endeavoured to terrify the loyal inhabitants into an adoption of their principles. The house of one, Jean Baptiste Cleval, a captain of Militia, and a man distinguished for his loyalty, was fired into, to the imminent danger of the lives of his family. The British subjects (settlers) were also subjected to a series of harassing annoyances, their fences were broken down, their cattle driven astray, their horses

cropped and otherwise disfigured, and a variety of petty injuries inflicted."

With regard to want of confidence in the law, here is what was said in an Address by what is called the Confederation of the Six Counties to the people of Canada, on the 24th of October 1837:

"Our citizens are deprived of the benefits of impartially-chosen juries, and are arbitrarily persecuted by Crown officers, who, to suit the purposes of the vindictive Government of which they are the creatures, have revived proceedings of an obsolete character, precedents for which are to be found only in the darkest pages of British history; thus our judiciary being filled by the combined conspiracies of a wicked executive, slavish judges, partisan law officers and political sheriffs, the innocent and patriotic are exposed to be sacrificed, whilst the enemies of the country and the violators of all law are patronised. The trial by jury, which we had been taught to look upon as the palladium of our liberties, is made a vain illusion or instrument of despotism, inasmuch as Sheriffs, creatures of the Executive . . . can select and summon such persons as they please, and thereby become themselves the arbiters in State prosecutions instituted against the people by their oppressors."

Let me read what Lord Durham said:

"The public have no security for any fairness in the selection of juries. There was no check on the Sheriff. The public knew he could pack a jury whenever he pleased, and supposed that an officer holding a lucrative appointment at the pleasure of the Government would be ready to carry into effect their designs."

There is the actual phrase, "the packing of juries," so far back, at anyrate, as Lord Durham's Report in 1837. That is not all.

MR F. W. LAMBTON: He maintained the law.

Yes; he maintained the law. No one would dream of saying a word against that. I have the greatest admiration for him. I only wish his able and distinguished relative in this house would offer to Ireland the same settlement that Lord Durham offered. All honour to Lord Durham. There was a state of things found in Canada—boycotting, firing into houses, injury to cattle, cattle—

driving; no confidence in the law nor in the administration of justice. What did he do?

He ended it by practically a stroke of the pen; by simply insisting that the people should be trusted. From the day that Lord Durham's policy of trust in the Canadian people has been carried out to this present moment there is no more peaceable or more law-abiding people in the Empire.

It was quite true, before the final offer of Home Rule was given, coercion was tried; and it is my case that because coercion failed and self-government succeeded, that, therefore, I say that the only remedy you can apply to Ireland with any hope of success is a remedy based upon similar principles.

As it happened in Canada, so it will happen in Ireland—when you throw responsibility on the shoulders of the people and not till then. Then respect for law will arise in Ireland; then confidence in the administration of justice will arise; and when that day comes, I am perfectly convinced that Ireland will become the most peaceable and most law-abiding, as she is to-day the most crimeless, part of your Empire.

APPENDIX

THE “ Veto ” Resolutions passed by the House of Commons on the 14th April 1910:—

MONEY BILLS.

“ 1. That it is expedient that the House of Lords be disabled by Law from rejecting or amending a Money Bill, but that any such limitation by Law shall not be taken to diminish or qualify the existing rights and privileges of the House of Commons.

“ For the purpose of this Resolution a Bill shall be considered a Money Bill if, in the opinion of the Speaker, it contains only provisions dealing with all or any of the following subjects, namely, the imposition, repeal, remission, alteration, or regulation of taxation; charges on the Consolidated Fund or the provision of money by Parliament; Supply; the appropriation, control, or regulation of public money; the raising or guarantee of any loan or the repayment thereof; or matters incidental to those subjects or any of them.”

BILLS OTHER THAN MONEY BILLS.

“ 2. That it is expedient that the powers of the House of Lords, as respects Bills other than Money Bills, be restricted by Law, so that any such Bill which has passed the House of Commons in three successive Sessions and, having been sent up to the House of Lords at least one month before the end of the Session, has been rejected by that House in each of those Sessions, shall become Law without the consent of the House of Lords on the Royal Assent being declared: Provided that at least two years shall have elapsed between the date of the first introduction of the Bill in the House of Commons and the date on which it passes the House of Commons for the third time.

“ For the purposes of this Resolution a Bill shall be treated as rejected by the House of Lords if it has not been passed by the House of Lords either without Amendment or with such Amendments only as may be agreed upon by both Houses.”

DURATION OF PARLIAMENT.

“ 3. That it is expedient to limit the duration of Parliament to five years.”

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